

OCEANS OF KNOWING:  
RAINBOWS IN THE MIST OF TRANSFORMATION AND EDUCATION

A WOMAN'S PILGRIMAGE THROUGH  
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND AND THE UNITED STATES

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We certify that we have read this portfolio project and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a portfolio project for the degree of Master of Arts in Pacific Islands Studies.

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## *Introduction*



*They say the land tells stories.  
They say the land talks and speaks  
and holds memory.*

First memories are of mountains, stream, river . . . Sky. *Imagination* . . . Walking from my grandparent's house in rural Pennsylvania up the hill to a grove of hemlock, maple, and oak—my brothers, cousins, and I would slide down a steep slope to a nearby creek where we would play for hours sloshing through the stream in all weathers and imagining what journeys we could take. Little did I know I would wander far from this ancient place into lands far away, farther than the eye could see. Many years later I found myself visiting sacred sites in several countries, including traveling to Aotearoa New Zealand for the first time in December, 1995. This journey sparked an ongoing interest in the islands, coming and going as time and resources permitted.

In June, 2006 I returned to Aotearoa New Zealand after being away for six-and-a-half years to participate in master's thesis research. Although I had previously walked this land as visitor, friend, and part of extended family now all my relationships were significantly challenged. Who is the researcher and the researched? What is knowledge and who is

responsible for its care—who ‘owns’ it? How could I be sensitive to the needs of the community and the academy? Was it even possible for a non-Maori ‘researcher’ to function in an academic role in this land?

The hope of finding a place of balance . . . between learning and knowledge, between community and self, between unity and separation, and the need for respecting and honoring the entire process has driven this multidimensional inquiry into culture, nature, and spirituality—exploring natural, organic relationships with self and other. In some ways I consider Aotearoa New Zealand to be a second home, more home than home. I had no idea what to expect. An online news article implored its readers to constantly imagine the impossible—to imagine the possibilities in dreaming the impossible (Solnit, 2004). In the lore of this island, Aotearoa New Zealand, it is said that the only story you can tell is your own and all else is held as a confidence.

*Inside a Story is Another Story*

***Aotearoa***

*31 December, 2006 – 1 January, 2007*

*“Nan, there’s a Pakeha in the house.”*

A kuia brings her son and grandson to Miringa Te Kakara marae to join a small group welcoming in the New Year. As we gathered around the fire late into the New Year’s eve night I could feel her hesitation and alarm about a Pakeha being on the marae, but chose to sit quietly and listen, remembering a friend’s advice—“Never ask questions of the elders.”

Gradually stories and introductions were shared. Upon leaving the following day she asked that I call in at her house for a cup of tea whenever I passed through the area. During one visit the kuia shared her mokopuna’s comment about a Pakeha in the house. They didn’t know what to make of my presence. Even though we laughed about it, there was concern voiced here. The house sits next to a marae and is home to the local Kohanga Reo. Their comment implied serious considerations about community relationships in a larger context. What on earth *would* a Pakeha lady be doing out in a rural area visiting a kuia?

***Aotearoa***

*Early February, 2007*

I travel to Awhitu about two hours southwest of Auckland to meet with two radical women who have an organic vegetable and flower farm where they offer work exchange positions through an organization known as Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF). We gather at the kitchen table with a cup of tea and it is immediately apparent something is amiss. They want to know why I am in New Zealand and what would be the purpose of my stay. I explain that I am interested in organic gardening as well as being involved in



conducting academic research and I planned to write in my spare time. Their reply was a blistering challenge to my presence in the Maori community, especially in the role of a researcher, saying in light of already strained relations between researchers and Maori that I had absolutely no business being there. Not only was there was enough pain in the local community without potentially creating more, they strongly felt it was best for Maori to choose their own path and make their own decisions within the Maori community and for Pakeha to stay with Pakeha and do the same. Furthermore, the extended family relationships I had with Maori, regardless of their current status, were only acts of kindness and not truly sincere. Prejudice, race, class, economic/political/social inequalities all came glaring into my face in one short fifteen minute meeting.

As I began to question the validity of long-term relationships in both the Maori and Pakeha communities I felt stung—stung by wairua, stung by the utter surprise of being taken to task by people of European descent in this country . . . as I had already heard similar concerns voiced by Maori on more than one occasion, including going nose to nose many years ago with a Maori activist on the marae until we realized that we were possibly working toward similar goals but through different paths . . . . But, as was explained long ago, a challenge is a challenge and one will walk with it until it is completed . . . that it is an honoring of the process and learning that comes about when dealing with it.

I had always gone to the marae, had always visited extended family, had always walked to and fro from the Maori community into the larger community and never really questioned it. Notions of connection to marae, to extended family, to land, to the ability and privilege of walking back and forth between different communities were laid bare. I had to clarify my present purpose, to move through this land with a deeper awareness of nascent

issues. Through these interactions and many others I have come to know connections are sometimes fragile and require great care. James Ritchie speaks of the principle of “pūtahi:”

“everything is connected to everything else in the Māori view of the world. Always put particular matters in the context of the whole. When Polynesian people are confronted with a problem, they do not seek to analyse it into components or parts but ask in what larger context it resides. They bring in ancestors as well as the unborn. Separation into parts is a violation of this principle, sometimes necessary, never desirable” (58).

It is possible to look back to go forward.

One might say to challenge a dominant research paradigm is sheer arrogance, but the mountains that rise from this land rise up in Hawai‘i to meet the mountains of the western Pacific crest and beyond—into the Eastern mountains . . . In between lies the ocean, rivers/currents of water/streams, springs . . . of knowledge, of knowing . . . This blood, nourished by the land, the food of the land provides sustenance and therefore deserves respect, deserves the challenge of meeting between two places—of the liminal spaces that inhabit each place . . .

*“So it’s important to get exposed to local stories that bring us into worlds of experience that are unknown to us, show us the concrete daily details of people whose lives have been underrepresented, help us reduce their marginalization, show us how partial and situated our understanding of the world is” (Ellis and Bochner, 748).*

The Body of the Earth is one.

## *Visualizing Research*

~  
*Imagining the potential,  
then walking the reality . . .*

Knowing I would be working in Aotearoa New Zealand and the United States required visualizing different ways of conducting and writing about research in multiple settings. The hope was, and still is to some extent, that by challenging and deconstructing state identified hegemonic research practices a door could be opened to a more inclusive, humanistic approach to research and knowledge production.

Linda Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* provided a starting point in the search for an appropriate, culturally sensitive approach to research methodology and practice. During our Pacific Islands studies methodology class a classmate challenged the text, saying she felt like the book was written for an indigenous audience and what relevance did it have for her as a Pakeha researcher? Although the idea of conducting research in both indigenous and non-indigenous communities may be controversial in some circles, I wondered if the values and practices incorporated into Kaupapa Maori research protocols could address basic human concerns and be of service to the larger community. This approach, however, was not intended as an appropriation of indigenous values, but rather questioning if it could then become a transitional, liminal space in a larger context where as Smith states, "research...should make a positive difference for the researched" (191).

I struggled with the idea of who would "own" the research, indeed who would hold copyright. Intellectual copyright is at best a hot issue, especially when dealing with indigenous knowledge. Some of the places I would visit touched upon iwi lands and hold ancestral knowledge. How could individual ownership serve or be accessible for the collective whole? While some of these questions were not answered and remain subject to

further inquiry, Fiona Cram suggests “for Maori the purpose of research is to uphold the interests and the mana of the group; it serves the community. Researchers are not building up their own status; they are fighting for the betterment of their iwi and for Maori people in general” (1). She also questions “who should now ‘do’ Maori research” (2).

The question still remained—how can theory and practice meet in a space where there are few maps for the journey?

### ***First Steps ~ “You must ask . . .”***

In Aotearoa, 2006 there was the message, “first, you must always ask permission.” Second, “you have to include people.” Third, “acknowledge the people of the land where you walk.” Fourth, “Be humble.” This echoed some of the readings of the previous semester, but in no way prepared me for realizing how an effort to combine conventional and indigenous research methods would prove a significant learning challenge or to know what might be appropriate. The role of tradition and the cultural and geographical diversity of the islands ask one to move beyond known academic boundaries and limits, but with concern for those involved. In *Researching the Pacific*, Margaret Mutu speaks to her apprenticeship with her elders and working in higher education. She identifies some of the differences between

“the skills and techniques required by the worlds of *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) and *Te Ao Pakeha*. In *Te Ao Māori* you are taught first and foremost to listen. In the university you fail the course if you do not understand. In *Te Ao Māori*, you keep listening until you do understand, even if it takes many years. And you learn to admit that you do not know and do not understand. In the university the written word is supreme and the library the greatest repository of written knowledge. In *Te Ao Māori*, the spoken word as delivered on the marae throughout the country is still most respected and those elders schooled in the ancient traditions of each hapū and iwi still recognised according to the field you are in and the works you have studied. In *Te Ao Māori* you are first and foremost a descendant of your ancestors without whom you would not exist” (55).



She also suggests that “when working in Māori or Pacific Islands studies it is always wise to adhere to those practices already condoned and practiced within those communities. Māori research methodologies, for example, do protect the researcher as well as those being researched. There are a few commonsense rules:

1. Know the limits of your own expertise and stay well within them.
2. Always let the people you’re talking about know what you’re doing and include them as much as you can in what you’re doing.
3. Never use the names of elders or tribal experts or their work in anything you may wish to publish without their fully informed consent, no matter how well known they are or how cooperative and supportive they may have appeared to have been.
4. Listen very carefully to any publicly voiced dissent about your research” (58).

Rules, however, are made to be respected as well as challenged when appropriate. When dealing with fractured and sometimes contentious communities there are no road maps to follow and one has to be created with the knowledge at hand. Much of this journey was conducted without any concrete reliable signs, instead relying upon formal and non-formal training, intuition, and known cultural limits.

Working within these limits it has been important to acknowledge the significance of cultural safety, taking into consideration the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health of the participants as well as the relationships that can exist in those spaces (Ramsden 2002). This can also hold true for location or place and is an issue I only became aware of after attending the Traditional Knowledge conference and reading Ramsden’s work where concerns were raised about respect and community well being. On more than one occasion knowledge received through written or oral transmission or personal experience had to be safeguarded—it could not be passed on or written down and remains held in silence. Ideally, research has to be ethical and include the well being of all participants, however the limitations inherent in any research project or community must be acknowledged.

“In Māori epistemology knowledge originates from the gods. Tane, having separated his parents Papatuanuku and Ranginui, and ever inquisitive, traversed the heavens to retrieve the three baskets of knowledge, such was the value placed on knowledge. Once retrieved, Tane was obligated to share what he found. He did so, scattering that knowledge on earth for human beings to search out, recover and use for their spiritual and physical development and well being. From that time to this a central principle has underpinned the search for knowledge for Māori – that it should benefit humankind. Contemporary Māori scholars are no less obligated to disseminate knowledge for the benefit of the people” (Hanora, 19–20)

Although Maori ideas and culture are an important part of this journey, Aotearoa is no longer strictly bicultural. Reflecting this change, the 2007 census showed “56.6% of the population were European, 18.9% Asian, 14.4% Pacific Islanders, and 11.1% Maori. More than one third—37%—were born overseas” (*New Zealand Herald*, 20 April 2007, A5).

I did find that conducting research with friends and extended family and being able to maintain any sort of subjectivity or distance was simply not possible. The idea of seeing them as “subjects” rather than active participants brought significant personal struggle. Russell Bishop, in *Collaborative Research Stories*, describes his experience researching his family genealogy in a formal setting. He talks about the challenges he faced gathering oral stories from his family and the subsequent review and publication process (1996). He was inside and outside at the same time working with very personal material and seemed to be dealing with serious concerns about the research process. I was looking within a Maori and Pacific perspective, as well as branching out to other communities and modes of research and learning experience. There were cultural and personal processes to incorporate within the research project, each presenting their own challenges.

In asking the question, “How is knowledge created and shared within a privileged elite?” I feel it is important to acknowledge the distinct difference between information/knowledge gained from reading books or articles, or sitting in a classroom. The

essence of a journey is a non-linear, spiral experience—beginning at a point to return to a point over and over again, much like a labyrinth, a maze, the sun coming out behind the clouds, the mountain towering above. There are always paths to be walked, explored, questioned. The idea of an experiential journey as “lived research” challenges the assumption that learning has to be conducted solely in a formal academic context. Van Manen argues that “pedagogical research becomes truncated from its own life if it fails to connect with the pedagogic challenges which inhere in the human experiences to which it has oriented itself” (162). In response to this particular question, sometimes no answers emerged at all and sometimes I was flooded with inquiries and mindless wanderings . . . It was a process of learning to recognize the gifts, knowledge, and pain present in one community may not be echoed through another—acknowledging the presence of many and learning to navigate as best I could through a myriad of ideas and experiences—a constant paradox where every day became a journey of learning, an experience of transformation.

*Wellington*  
*June, 2006*

Fourteen hours by bus, leaving early morning from a small Coromandel town one-and-a-half hours southeast of Auckland, traveling through the night during one of the most intense winter storms New Zealand has seen in many years. The bus is rocked by high winds and heavy rain . . . the shapes of the land are unfamiliar as I am going down the eastern side of the island, past Taupo, past an area with rolling hills and clear cuts in the distance, speaking to a land planted with pines, land which once held native forest. This sight brings back memories of patchwork forest and scarred areas often seen throughout the Pacific Northwest in the United States. It is quite a shock to see it here . . .

I've been home about two weeks and have come to Wellington to attend an academic conference sponsored by Nga Pae o te Maramatanga, the National Institute of Research Excellence for Maori Development and Advancement. The conference, *Mantaranga Taketake: Traditional Knowledge*—Indigenous Indicators of Well-being: Perspectives, Practices, and Solutions examined well-being from an indigenous perspective, ie our relationship to one another, to our community, and to our planet, asking the question: How do we know when we are well? The conference opened my eyes to the power of community involvement and engagement from the ground up—the absolute importance of group participation at every level. Although this idea is not new in the Maori community it was rather new to me, clearly demonstrating the necessity for ongoing consultation and community support as an essential part of the research process.

The event helped complement a conference on religion, nature, and culture I had attended in April. At one panel scholars discussed which books to use for teaching about nature and why they are important. I suggested that books provide an indirect experience and potentially perpetuate a hierarchical process that subjugates a person's experience and knowledge and to consider developing an academic curriculum where oral tradition and 'alternative' expressions of knowledge are considered valid forms of scholarship.

The return journey to New Zealand was also a challenge to the dominant western paradigm I know so well—one that holds dear an idea of separation and objectivity. This mode of approaching the world, and especially academic scholarship left me asking, "How could I know myself outside the context of direct experience?" How could one develop a sense-memory of place, of relationship, of knowing outside of a book—or another person's story? Just as first words have memory, especially those learned as a young child, first places have memory. New Zealand holds many of these for me.

### *What is Your Position?*

This question was placed beside me in February, 2007 by a University of Auckland education faculty member. She wanted to know, “Where are you positioned with your work?” Basic question. I thought I was working as “one of the whanau who just happens to be doing research” (Cram, 3). I thought I was positioned in the middle, could be positioned in the middle without serious regard for pertinent issues or without having to take sides. Given the highly complex nature of contemporary and historical relationships between Maori and Pakeha communities along with my own transition from visitor to year-round resident it was a highly unrealistic place to be.

### *Geographical/genealogical location . . .*

When asked where I am from the reply is usually, “All over.” This is part of where I stand. People are often perplexed by this answer, however if I am further challenged I will say that I was born in the States and my closest ties are to the land, to whenua. In this regard I feel at home wherever I go because Earth is my true home and ancestors come from all over. What is known of my family’s genealogy is mainly of European descent, but there are stories of other lines as well and I often wonder where ancestors may have lived or traveled . . . If called for and at a culturally appropriate time, a pepeha will be shared depending upon the context I am in:

E nga mana, e nga reo, e Nga Hau e Wha.  
Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Ko Ruapehu raua ko Rainier oku maunga.  
Ko Te Moana nui a Kiwa toku moana.  
Ko Susquehanna toku awa.  
Ko Nga Hau e Wha toku iwi.  
Ko Te Miringa Kakara toku marae.  
Ko Judith toku ingoa.

A pepeha is part of a formal introduction in Maori. It is a reflection of an oral tradition and whakapapa that links people to past, present, and future. A pepeha looks to the mountain to provide an anchor in present time before venturing into the past (*What is Tikanga*, maori.org.nz)—it looks to the ocean, to the river, the whenua, and many other places, walking in the footsteps of the ancestors and those yet to come, informing and guiding through the spirit that lives everywhere. In this respect, Mt Rainier in Washington State and Ruapehu in Aotearoa New Zealand are my mountains. The Susquehanna in Pennsylvania is my river. Nga Hau e Wha—the people of the four winds are my tribe. Te Miringa Kakara is the marae on the North Island we call home. My name is Judith, daughter of Mary, daughter of Charlotte, daughter of Stella, daughter of Harriet, daughter of Rachel, daughter of . . . .

“*I nga wa o mua*” (*What is Tikanga*, maori.org.nz) is a Maori saying that speaks to looking back to be able to look forward. Sometimes it is a great challenge to negotiate between these two worlds, to create or follow a map, cultural and otherwise that allows for safe navigation. From January, 2007 to April, 2008 was the first time I’ve spent so much time in the European community and this journey has awakened a deeper experience of racism and social inequities. I am positioned as an outsider and will always be an outsider to New Zealand Maori and European communities, however it has been pointed out by whanau that I am only an outsider if I choose to be an outsider. It has also been suggested that being present as an “American” and being raised outside the country has allowed for more fluid movement and presence within Aotearoa, for the ability to listen, observe, and participate in other ways.

It is a place where I feel uncomfortable . . . where the boundaries of being perceived as an outsider tend to blur, but are not entirely absent. Although my own identity is not that

of white-Pakeha descent, but rather human being and global citizen often the assumption from other people is that I am of the former rather than the latter. It is only recently that I realized what privilege has been extended in being able to participate fully in both communities—living on the marae, learning te reo, attending hui, and spending time with whanau.

### *Spiritual location . . .*

This presents yet another challenge. Respect for place, for guardians of place, for the caretakers who may have been present for generations is a consideration. Whether in an urban, suburban, or rural setting there is always the reminder that the land upon which I am walking is the legacy of those who came before. Although I claim no specific spiritual orientation or religious practice, it is through nature that I most often find my grounding into a sense of interconnection. Often these experiences are difficult to speak of in academia as the whole person, the body and knowing of the whole person, is set aside in favor of intellectual activity. This is why place becomes so important to me, even in a formal classroom setting.

Walking Takapuna beach near Auckland one day with a friend I reflected on how the water washing up in the waves there may have come from a stream far across the sea . . . how the minerals in the sand are similar to those in our bones. How water comprises the majority of our bodies . . . How could we not be connected one to another? Zen Buddhist master Thich Nhat Hahn claims there can be no separate existence, for part of the nature of interbeing is the interdependence of one element to the other. There is no separation nor can there be. The flower is as integral to the wind, as water is to the tree. He says,

“When we look into the heart of a flower, we see clouds, sunshine, minerals, time, the earth, and everything else in the cosmos in it. Without clouds there could be no rain, and there would be no flower. Without time, the flower

could not bloom. In fact the flower is made entirely of non-flower elements; it has no independent individual existence. It ‘inter-is’ with everything else in the universe” (11).

Acknowledging and reclaiming our vital connection with nature brings us into the realm of reciprocity in the natural world and realignment with one’s true divine nature. Land, place, water—all are part of the people I see around me and underlie the complexity of the simplicity present there . . .

***What does it mean to become bicultural, to grow a bicultural awareness?***

***Aotearoa***  
*June, 2007*

Walking through, physically living in Aotearoa New Zealand over the past six months has literally transformed the way I view interior New Zealand and its connections around the globe. A friend, a Birkenhead native, speaks of his experiences shopping in the local market and how he often resents the presence of people who are different from him. “Oh, those bloody Chinese,” I sometimes hear him say. “I don’t like them here. I wish they would speak English.”

There have been frequent conversations about his adaptation or non-adaptation to change in a country where he was born and has lived all his life, how rapid change can challenge a person’s assumptions about their local neighborhood, community, and country. How sometimes his perceptions as an older New Zealand-born man have included the privilege of living in relative isolation from the rest of the world and now the world is coming here. It’s hard to explain in a way.

I feel more affected by the ongoing change in a gut, visceral way seeing people from so many different places, hearing multiple languages spoken on the street and in the shops on any given day. When I was first coming in and out of New Zealand between late 1995 to



early 2000, the country I fell in love with was mainly European and Maori. Returning in June, 2006 I was shocked to walk down Queen Street in Auckland's central business district and see the shift to a whole new ethnic makeup. Since I was curious about how this change was affecting other people, I began casually asking academics and local people: How is New Zealand dealing with the shift from a bi-cultural to a multicultural nation? What are your perceptions and experiences of these changes? Often included in the reply was a comment, especially in the Maori community, about the need to resolve outstanding Treaty issues before multiculturalism could even be considered—and is a multicultural environment needed anyway? I had to open my eyes and *see* the implications of a bicultural dynamic in a larger context, to see the how there are no easy or simple answers to any of these questions.

Although I do not understand all the implications of the Treaty and Treaty rights, I have come to understand the related issues are very complex. When standing before a Te Papa museum Treaty exhibit in Wellington there was a sense that the English and Maori versions said two very different things, but at the time I didn't think much of it, assuming the Treaty was similar to the US government. Also implied was the assumption that New Zealand would indeed become multicultural, although this topic remains the subject of considerable public and private debate.

A recent New Zealand Herald article (9 June 2007) entitled “All things bright and beautiful” further awakened my awareness, speaking of the Wai 262 claim before the Waitangi Tribunal. It states,

“the claim is about acknowledging Maori do have rights and interests to flora and fauna and that if taonga are to be taken offshore, or genetically modified, Maori need to be actively engaged in the discussion and involved in the decision-making. The claim is also about an increasing ‘misappropriation and offensive’ use of Maori words, images and designs by national and international companies” (B5).

Rights to land and control of traditional knowledge were questions that came to mind and are ones that merit further inquiry.

The challenge then: How to live and work appropriately in what is supposed to be a 'bicultural' country?

"bicultural relationships refer to the interaction between any two people. Regardless of the number of people in an audience or group there remains but one giver and one receiver of a message. Both messenger and receiver act through a culturally laden environment and both are individualised. Thus it is not possible to anticipate or make assumptions about the ideas or behaviors of either participant or to stereotype people as group members" (Ramsden, 111).

Ramsden's assertion that bicultural relationships can happen between any two people regardless of origin presents a paradox in my current position, as I interact with people from multiple places. James Ritchie in his book *Becoming Bicultural* "defines biculturalism as two predominant cultures here, not one. Pākēha culture . . . and Māori culture" (6). While I am aware that my own culture of origin and personal lens does influence interactions with people and place, I have learned that becoming bi-cultural can also mean negotiating the Maori world/Maori terrain on their own terms—respecting the implication of Treaty rights and relations with the Crown—not imposing my own expectations or hopes, while maintaining my own sense of place, recognizing that I am most often walking between vastly different worlds.

So where am I positioned? In the liminal spaces/places between the cracks, exploring, wandering, wondering . . . That's where I most often walk, where I learn . . . Place is used quite intentionally here. She, Papatuanuku, Earth mother anchors me . . . and provides a stable place to Be.

*Dialogue 1*  
~  
*A Cup of Tea, A Conversation . . .*

*The kettle is on, cups of tea brewed for whanau and manuhiri,  
bikkies out on the table . . . korero is afoot.*

In *A Hidden Wholeness*, Parker Palmer talks about the nature of truth saying:

“You and I may hold different conceptions of truth, but we *must* mind the difference. Whether we know it or not, like it or not, acknowledge it or not, our lives are interconnected in a complex web of causation. My understanding of truth impinges on your life, and yours impinges on mine, so the differences between us matter to both of us” (126–127).

Continuing:

“My working definition of truth is simple, though practicing it is anything but: ‘Truth is an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline.’ Truth cannot possibly be found in the conclusions of the conversation, because the conclusions keep changing. So if we want to live ‘in the truth,’ it is not enough to live in the conclusions of the moment. We must find a way to live in the continuing conversation, with all its conflicts and complexities, while staying in touch with our own inner teacher” (127).

Palmer’s work intrigues me, simply because his premise is that conversation begins initially within and then moves out into the world. He speaks to creating a level of trust that makes conversation possible while respecting its deep complexities. Perhaps “if we aspire to contribute something to our society—to achieve a new vision of things—we need to begin with ourselves. We need to decide to transform ourselves” (Ricard as quoted in Goleman, 215). Vision and healing begin from the inner life . . .

Joanna Macy suggests that in order to heal the world, we must first heal ourselves and acknowledge our ancestors and the gifts they bring us:

“To enter into our healing as self, as world, let us move out into Deep Time. Let the reaches of time that we inhabit with our ancestors and those to come become real to us, as our birthright and wider home. Let us step out of the tiny, hurried compartment of time, where our culture and habits would

enclose us. Let us breathe deep and ease into the vaster horizons of our larger story and our true, shared being” (Macy 1991, 226).

To do so requires the ability and willingness to enter a realm of deep feeling, often beyond words and thinking . . . a space of knowing, of connectedness beyond what we know surpassing our own limitations into a field where consciousness and communication can bloom. By acknowledging our ancestors we also pay respect to those who came before us and those who provide their support and knowledge for our path linking our knowing to past, present, and future. It is said we walk on the shoulders of our ancestors and we have a responsibility to care for what has been passed on—life, culture, land . . .

Daniel Goleman is one who speaks of culture and emotional intelligence, saying culture is in constant flux. He shares a story about “*The Individual Versus the Collective*” (255) from a gathering with scientists and the Dalai Lama. He says:

“‘that cultures change all the time.’

That point, the Dalai Lama felt, was key. As the Dalai Lama later told me, he still had qualms and methodological questions about generalizing when it came to cultural differences, if only because cultures evolve. He had seen in his own culture that simply communicating with other cultures outside brings change. It might be useful to know about differences such as the degree to which emotions are expressed by a group—but even so, everyone feels the same emotions underneath. As a figure on the world stage, the Dalai Lama preferred to focus on the commonalities and then nod to differences as needed. His core belief, that people are essentially the same at the fundamental level, meant that he did not look at whether someone is Chinese or Indian or American, but rather sought to find solutions for the human dilemmas faced by everyone” (255).

Heart is the key. Knowing one’s feeling and center of being is universal.

Identity can change, place can change, ideas and culture can change.

“Even though a society does not emphasize this, this most important use of knowledge and education is to help understand the importance of engaging in more wholesome actions and bringing discipline within our minds. The proper utilization of our intelligence and knowledge is to effect changes from within that develop a good heart.” (Dalai Lama as quoted in Goleman, 258–259).

Frances Brown proposes the development of an emotionally competent classroom as a complement to intellectual studies. His dissertation speaks to the potential for every human being to find their unique gifts and learn the competencies to bring these gifts into the world. Brown asserts emotion is as vital to life as water and constitutes a critical part of education and curriculum development. He outlines “Seven Circles of Transformation” (185) as part of a holistic cultural pedagogy. He developed a learning pathway that integrates “aboriginal knowledge, the medicine wheel, strengthening learning identity, values, the development of physical, mental, spiritual, volitional, and emotional competency, the creation of ideals, and vision” (v–vi). Brown speaks about how we must “first learn to identify our emotions, then understand the meaning and feedback of the emotional process, and to connect this emotional competency and our unique gifts with the community around us” (7). His work is groundbreaking in addressing emotional development and competency for indigenous youth in traditional classrooms.

I would like to believe the idea or experience of separation, of feeling from intellect, mind from body can be transformed into one of wholeness and radical creative love, one that holistically supports innate qualities of mind, body, and spirit. As Antonia Darder writes,

“In creating anew a movement for social transformation, a revolutionary love compels us to become part of a new decolonizing culture that cultivates human connection, intimacy, trust and honesty, from the body out into the world. Love, here, also means to comprehend that the moral and the material are inextricably linked. And as such, our politics must recognize love as an essential ingredient of a just society. Love as a political principle motivates the struggle to create mutually life-enhancing opportunities for all people. It is a love that is grounded in the mutuality and interdependence of our human existence—that which we share, as much as that which we do not. This is a love nurtured by the act of relationship itself. It cultivates relationships across our differences, without undue fear. Such an emancipatory love allows us to realize our nature, in a way that allows others to do so as well. Inherent in such a love is the understanding that we are never at liberty to be violent, authoritarian, or exploitive” (15–16).

As an elder recently shared, you can go ask ten different questions of ten different people and no two answers may be the same. Place each one in a basket and consider them all. Take time to reflect, and then sort out what is useful and true for you. It may not be so for anyone else and it is important not to place one above the other. They simply live side by side in their own conversation, their own form of life and being.

## *Asking Permission*

### Set sail to the four winds . . .

A grandmother greets her mokopuna:

*"Before beginning any journey a karakia is said asking permission  
of the ancestors and Creator to enter the space you are traveling and to grant safe passage . . .*

*It is a sign of respect and a way to acknowledge connection."*

"To chant the words of the *karakia* is to become one with the ancestors and to use their words to invoke the *atua*, the spiritual powers, and in loosing ourselves from what is destructive, binding ourselves to what is life giving. Then in the 'eternal present' of ritual, one with the spiritual powers and strengthened with their *tapu* and *mana*, we become one with the whole movement of creation *i te kore, ki te poo, ki te ao marama*, 'from the nothing, to the night, to the world of light'.

To become one with the ancestors and the spiritual powers" (Shirres, 77).

## He Karakia

### *Waipoua*

*February 20, 2007*

*Before entering, ask permission..  
Ask the trees, ask wind, ask Creator.*

It is important to ask in recognition of the beings who live here in the forest  
*both seen and unseen.*

They have a domain too, a way of *being*.

Always ask before entering ~  
acknowledge the ancestors who came before,  
*ask Creator for permission . . .*

*This is their home too.*

The spirit of place . . .  
*The knowing that what belongs to them . . .*

All languages are the language of my ancestors.  
All languages are the language of the heart.

In Waipoua, next to the river.

# *Inner Journey*

~

## *Te Po*

*"I am aged in aeons, being Te Po, the Night,  
that came from Te Kore, the Nothing.  
First there was Te Kore that could neither be felt nor sensed.  
This was the void, the silence, where there was no movement and none to move, no sound and  
none to hear, no shape and none to see.  
It was out of this nothingness that Increase and Consciousness,  
and I, Te Po, were born.  
I am aged in aeons, and I am Night of many nights,  
Night of many darknesses — Night of great darkness,  
long darkness, utter darkness, birth and death darkness; of darkness unseen, darkness  
touchable and untouchable,  
and of every kind of darkness that can be.  
In my womb lay Papatuanuku who was conceived in Darkness,  
born into Darkness — and who matured in Darkness,  
and in Darkness became mated with the Sky.  
Then Papatuanuku too conceived,  
and bore many children among the many long ages of Te Po"  
(Kahukiwa and Grace, 16).*

*Coming out of nothing you wait and learn to listen.* The anticipation of the place in-between, the *not* knowing, the uncertainty—knowing there is a place of origin that links you in with other places and people from many different lands. The/a wind blows and a/the land speaks . . . *The void.*

Creation stories are found in many different cultures. They speak to a place of origin and to the creative, transformative principle contained within the earth's body. This body encompasses a landscape of language, an innate way of communicating and recognition of the ability to touch the larger cosmos through the natural world.

*Just get me 'out there' so I can hear in here . . . inner space . . . Knowing . . .*

"All things can hear and understand our speaking, for all things are capable of speech. Much as humans communicate not only with audible utterances but with visible movements and gestures, so the land also speaks . . . through visible gestures and signs"



(Abram, 153). The natural world is known to have a unique, viable language as expressed through animals, trees, weather, the shape of the land and ocean, and many other ways. Abram claims there is a reciprocity to the senses, that the natural world is aware and in tune with our own language, yet claiming a language uniquely their own. We are just as touched by the places where we live as by the places around us. He also claims, “Human persons, too, are shaped by the places they inhabit, both individually and collectively. Our bodily rhythms, our moods, our cycles of creativity and stillness, and even our thoughts are readily engaged and influenced by the shifting patterns of the land” (267).

*The waterfall, (the) water moves . . . it is the land of the ancestors . . .*

It is understood that nature and humans influence one another on many levels—both seen and unseen—that it is possible to have a living, breathing reciprocal relationship in concert with the world around one. With this in mind, we are called to awaken to the natural world around us, to pay closer attention to thoughts, feelings, and sensations, to re-member . . . .

### ***Koe wai koe?***

#### ***What is your memory?***

Sitting beside a river one day in a remote bush area, the following words came:

*Inscribe upon my body . . .  
The name of the land  
. . . the sound, spirit of water . . .*

*Flowers growing . . .  
The memory of the waters*

*Inscribe upon my heart  
the sound of the river  
the lore of the land  
the song of the heart*

*Ko wai koe?*

*Waipoua, 2006–2007*

Acknowledgement here must be given to Te Iwi o Te Roroa, the local tribe with guardianship of this land and special place.

*Deepest gratitude to the old ones who hold this place sacred  
and to those who continue on  
in renewal and safeguarding the ancient treasures . . .  
Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.*

*Trees speak, and trees walk and dance . . . Hear trees in the wind and the swaying breeze  
. . . Birdsong.*

Here in this ancient place reside some of the oldest trees of the forest. The area is especially known for its kauri, with some trees said to be over 1,000 years old. To come here is to be humbled by the immensity of a presence that speaks deep in silence. I sit here and wait. Two kereru sit overhead and join in the silence. A cool wind blows through, leaves rustle, and I hear birds calling in the distance. What does it mean to travel thousands of miles to sit in the presence of an ancient grandmother who has been here since before the beginning of time? What is it to enter the deep silence that the forest inherently holds? Who is the mirror at this time?



*Tane Mahuta*



*Inscribe upon my body  
the name of the land,  
the song of the river . . .  
The sound of the earth.*

*Ko wai koe?  
Where are your waters?*

~ ~ ~

***How can we remember that which is known to us?***

*Much of what we take as contemporary thought was born many thousands of years ago. This knowledge comes back to us through the cycles that Taoists believe link all elements of the world together, called wu hsing . . . I discuss what I call body memory. I believe that we can learn to unlock the memories that the matter in our bodies have of their past configurations as rock, soil, forests, and most certainly as water. This is a relief to me. It means that I don't have to learn everything anew, but simply be silent enough to remember it (Legault, 24).*

Being in the natural world can provide an entry point for a person to experience firsthand a complex web of patterns and living relationships—a vital link to understanding one's sense of place through earth-centered knowledge. Part of the process for linking into the deeper self/community and larger world is created by touching upon the liminal space that exists between the natural and human worlds, to move beyond mind-centered theoretical space into an experiential, multi-sensory experience.

Nature holds the matrix of creation and through the signature of natural places invites us to journey to a place deep within ourselves, to explore and expand our boundaries and limits. For instance, *what does it mean to see/feel a landscape? What does it mean to say "the mountain is out today," as is often the case when Mt Rainier/Tahoma in Washington is seen on a clear day? It is a large mountain, over 14,000 ft. with snow and glaciers, sometimes shrouded by mist and fog. Its waters feed into the streams and rivers that become the Pacific Ocean and are home to many. One can watch the progression of the snow line up and down its body through the seasons, but only when "the mountain is out". What does it mean to walk through the forests in its foothills and feel the biting, crisp fall air*

*accompanied by musky dampness, hear the leaves crunching underfoot, their sound and senses transmitted into my body?* This living relationship with the earth, the daily seasons and rhythms of the year are supported by the learning and growth that comes from the forests and hills, from the mountains and rivers—clear to the ocean on both sides of the Pacific. The waters here touch the waters there.

*It is a memory ~ of re-connecting—inner being . . . outer Being.*

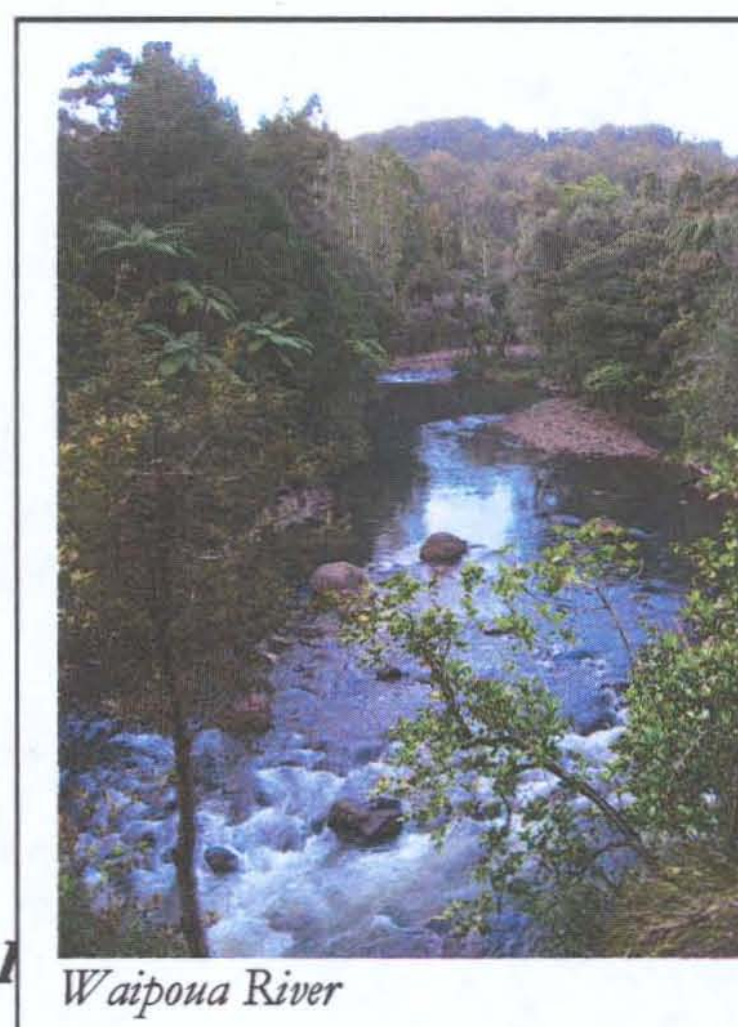
Using our senses to perceive the world around us, we are not limited to what we know. Michael J Cohen, founder and director of Project Nature Connect states, “When we feel our natural sensations, we actually sense the global life community nurturing its flow in and through us, guiding us as part of it” (as quoted in Smith 1999, N pag). Cohen “has documented at least 53 natural senses and sensitivities to our environment. These ways of knowing our world include senses like color, thirst, language, smell, taste, consciousness, belonging, space, distance, form, temperature, and touch. Each is unique, each offers a specific message and wisdom” (as quoted in Smith 1999, N pag). These senses allow us to explore our world in a variety of ways, to learn how our bodies are in tune with natural cycles and rhythms. Through these rhythms, we begin to know we are innately imprinted with the signature of the divine—of spirit at work and play.

Spirituality can also touch and recognize the presence of spirit through the practices of the world’s religions and indigenous wisdom traditions. Spiritual practices are based upon universal tenets that speak to one’s soul and relationship with a divine being.

“The pursuit of spiritual perfection can be traced back to the dawn of civilization. Thousands of years ago wise people realized that spiritual qualities such as compassion, wisdom, and understanding were inextricably linked to feeling truly content and at peace with life. The ancients saw happiness as an enlightened state, and their healing arts aimed to promote a sense of spiritual as well as emotional and physical well-being. In trees, plants, and flowers they saw divine qualities that could inspire this form of healing” (Harvey and Cochrane, 72–73).

Spiritual practice can also include the recognition of an omnipresent spirit—speaking to the possibility of being connected with the thread of all life. It is here where the boundaries between the known and the unknown, seen and unseen begin to disappear. In the Buddhist tradition there is the practice of stilling one's self and looking deeply. Thich Nhat Hahn says, "‘Know’ means to acquire wisdom, insight, or understanding. The Buddhist term is *vipasyana* (insight, or looking deeply). ‘Looking deeply’ means observing something or someone with so much concentration that the distinction between observer and observed disappears" (10). Knowing comes as part of our intuitive, feeling nature. We have an innate understanding of the ability to touch our own true, inner nature through the practice of looking deeply, or having insight. He also says, "When we are still, looking deeply, and touching the true source of our wisdom, we touch the living Buddha and the living Christ in our selves and each person we meet" (11). By "touching the true source of our wisdom," (11) boundaries between matter and spirit dissolve. The illusion of separation can no longer exist. There is a deep knowing that one is truly connected and that they are part of everything around them. With this knowing, a new dialogue with one's self and true nature can begin.

*Surrender . . .*



*Waipoua River*



*"When you make pilgrimage to your homeland(s), either literally or figuratively on the page, you make pilgrimage to yourself. How does your body reflect the soil that still circles through you?" (Brandeis, 21).*

The idea of pilgrimage is to visit special places in order to quicken or activate a particular kind of knowing within the pilgrim (Bolen, 202). Moving beyond the mind into the realm of embodied knowing involves a journey of the heart, of opening to other ways of knowing and sharing our experiences. As Jean Shinoda Bolen has suggested, "To bring about a paradigm shift in the culture that will change assumptions and attitudes, a critical number of us have to tell the stories of our personal revelations and transformations" (272). Parker Palmer is one who writes that "knowing is loving . . . that another kind of knowledge is available to us, one that begins in a different passion and is drawn toward other ends . . . a knowledge that originates not in curiosity but in compassion, or love—a source not celebrated in our intellectual tradition but in our spiritual heritage. The goal of a knowledge arising from love is the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds" (1983, 8). The pilgrimage espoused in this journey touched upon places from childhood, from adult lives, to schooling in various places—sacred, mundane, contentious, lively . . . arising from a desire to know—Who am I? Where have I come from? Where am I going? Questions embodied in the stars and anchored here on earth. Questions that tear people apart and bring them back together again . . . to engage in spoken and unspoken conversations . . . to explore the essence of Being . . .

*"I don't fit anywhere and for the first time that feels correct.  
I am walking along a nameless path.  
This walking creates the path, is not separate from the way.  
Walking becomes the way to weave together the threads that I hold of different traditions.  
The way of the pilgrim is always to walk, no matter what the country or culture"  
(Galland, 212).*

### *Solitude*

*“Aloneness teaches us how we are really connected to and interdepending with everything. Paradoxical though it may seem, solitude reveals our interrelatedness . . . For some, silence is medicine. For others, silence seems like poison and is actually feared. We in the ‘developed’ world seem to have many auditory strategies that insulate us from the presence of silence, simplicity, and solitude . . . Indeed, we seem to have an aversion not only to silence but also to space, to emptiness of both space and time . . . An individual who chooses simplicity, silence, or solitude is frequently assumed to be depressed, angry, or in some way impoverished. We are afraid of our loneliness, this solitude that might make us feel empty. But empty of what? we must ask ourselves” (Halifax, 30–31).*

*“I needed to be ‘medicined’ by the old ways before I made the return journey to my culture of origin” (Halifax, 31).*

### ***Hawai‘i – Aotearoa***

*December, 2005*

I board a plane on Christmas Eve to deliberately avoid the angst of Christmas Day. Crossing the international date line there is no Christmas this year. It is a choice to be in solitude amidst a group of strangers high in the sky—32,000 ft. above the Pacific ~ Moana nui a Kiwa. An ancient journey, made many times. Greeted as I am by old friends at Auckland airport, we are together for a few days before I am unexpectedly drawn to return to Te Miringa, the old place of learning.

*South . . .*

New Year’s eve ~ a fire is lit, stories shared, the doors of the roundhouse opened, a karanga sent by the kuia into the night. Haunting. I know not where to go or why I am here except to complete a research paper that has a life and rhythm of its own. An old Journey . . .

Sitting in the cross house under the moon my sister has the same questions—Why am I here? Where am I going? Inexplicably I feel called to lift the water bowl and head to Coromandel waters. *North . . . To ask permission is to be renewed.* I suddenly know that to

continue the journey the water must be lifted and carried to the far north. How, I know not—only knowing it will be revealed along the way. Traveling *East* . . . past the hot springs of Taupo to the south . . . beyond eye's vision—rushing geysers, thermal generating stations, rolling hills longing out into flat plains—*North* . . . to Mangakino, deep into the valley to cross the river and come up again—to Tokoroa, where I stop to pick up a blanket because the nights are cold, and north again drawn by the *Song* of the Coromandel hills. I long to know Home and hear the sound of the stream.

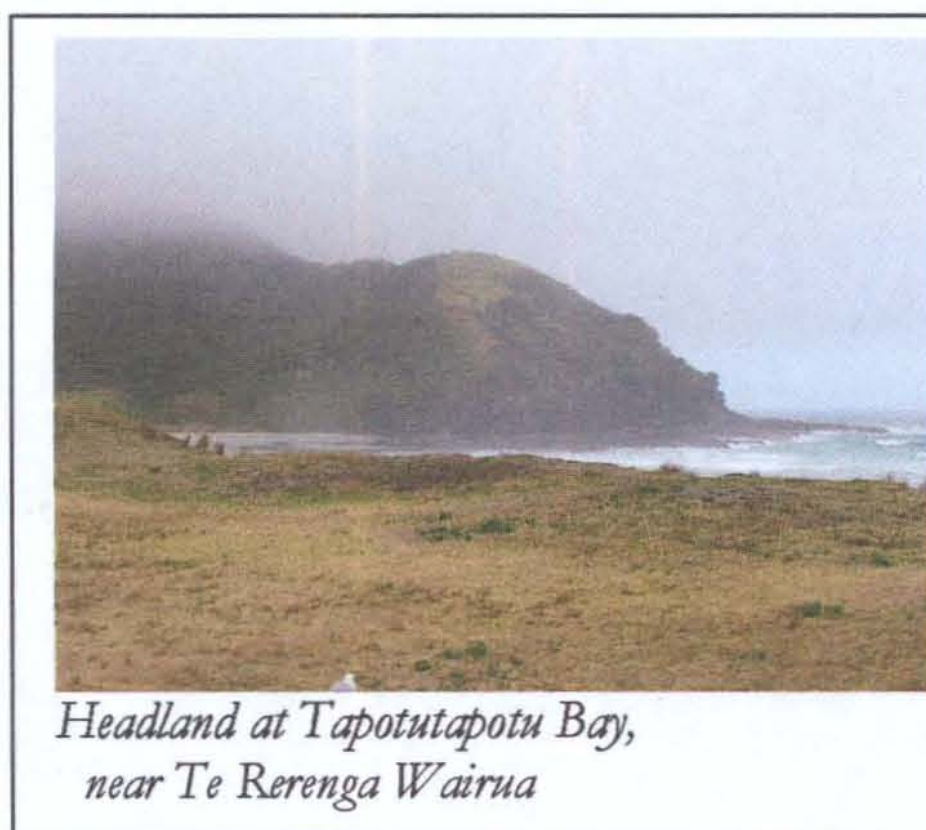
Greeted there by old friends and the waters we share a cup of tea and *korero*. Asking permission, explaining the unforsaken need to travel North to the tip of the island—the fish's tail—unknown why, just a *knowing of what needs to be done in order to complete the journey and move on* . . .

To ask permission to carry on in this island . . . . After all, it has been years of walking this land, between here and there, between worlds of culture, Heart, knowing, longing, learning, separation, unity, passive, active—all ways of Being. To be able to study, to be able to live, breathe, walk upon this land is to ask the Ancestors, to ask Creator for permission to be here . . .

***Te Rerenga Wairua ~ Cape Reinga***

*January, 2006*

*~ excerpts from a letter to a friend (sent January 23, 2007)*



*Headland at Tapotutapotu Bay,  
near Te Rerenga Wairua*



At the lighthouse, after pouring the water from the water bowl,

*"Brothers and sisters . . ."*  
*(chant from the journeys)*

Hawai'i to Auckland to the marae for New Year's eve and full moon in the cross house. I had expected to sit and write, to settle in on the Coromandel for about a month and complete the thesis, but was instead called to travel up north. Up to Coromandel to lift the water, stop in Whangarei, Pukenui (just north of Kaitaia), then car camping for two nights and two days at Tapotupotu Bay (just east of Te Rerenga Wairua) in a wild storm with crashing surf, land shrouded in deep fog and torn by roaring winds, rocking the car and my soul . . .

The journey north was to ask permission to begin writing and stay on here in this land. It just felt like the right thing to do before beginning formal writing or any further formal study here . . . I went up one morning around 6:00am to see about walking out to the lighthouse but the winds and fog were still too wild . . . The next morning around 8:30am a light fog broke and I could see out the path and walk to clear sky and views to two oceans. Coromandel water was tipped onto the land accompanied by a karakia, an old chant emerging spontaneously, a reminder of journeys past . . . of brothers and sisters walking together . . . I left shortly thereafter, feeling as though it was time to depart the world of the spirits for the land of the living . . . headed to Kaitaia for some kai . . . a very powerful time sitting beside the sea like that.

~ ~ ~

*Dusty roads, salty winds – sea speaks.  
Birds fly overhead, riding air, wind, song.*

*Earth speaks.*

*O wairua, you touch the soul,  
The Bones of Ancestors, held  
in caves long forgotten  
your journey danced  
in Distant Shores*

*Remember.*

*Be.*

*Love.*

~

*Te Wai*  
~  
*Water Journey, the Water Bowl . . . A Vessel*

*Water flows, Water re-members.*

*We give thanks to those ancestors who have held this space for so long . . .*

Some years ago I received a water bowl from a friend, a clay vessel for carrying divine waters from one place to another. The first water journey was up a Coromandel stream to fill the bowl with waters of memory, of reconnection. The first journey would see bare feet traversing root, dirt, and rock high up into the native bush to witness eel and trout meeting nose to nose, to be initiated into the sound of the stream, the rongoa of the forest and her Holy waters. *Communion . . .*

Little did I know this gift would send me to faraway places, sometimes afloat, sometimes not. Waters lifted from Coromandel went on a journey that extended from Aotearoa to sacred places in Washington and Oregon, *Waters* lifted to travel from Seattle to the East coast ~ up the spine of the Appalachian mountains and back again. *Waters* from Seattle to *Aotearoa* returning to the West coast . . . Many, many journeys always returning the waters of its birth and going Home, Home to the essence of Being . . .

Early in 2000 the bowl was buried in the bosom of Earth high above the Coromandel stream accompanied by Kahu and a stone from Great Barrier Island. It was remembered for years wondering if it was still there ~ if, indeed, it would still be intact.

I went up the valley in July, 2006 thinking it had been swept away by an intense flood that had gone through some seven weeks earlier, a flood that scoured the streambed and nearby mountains sending boulders the size of small houses down the valley, thinking I would never see it again ~ the taonga left behind sent to the sea. No one had seen it, although it lay in plain sight, lain bare by the rushing waters, sheltered by a nearby stone. The



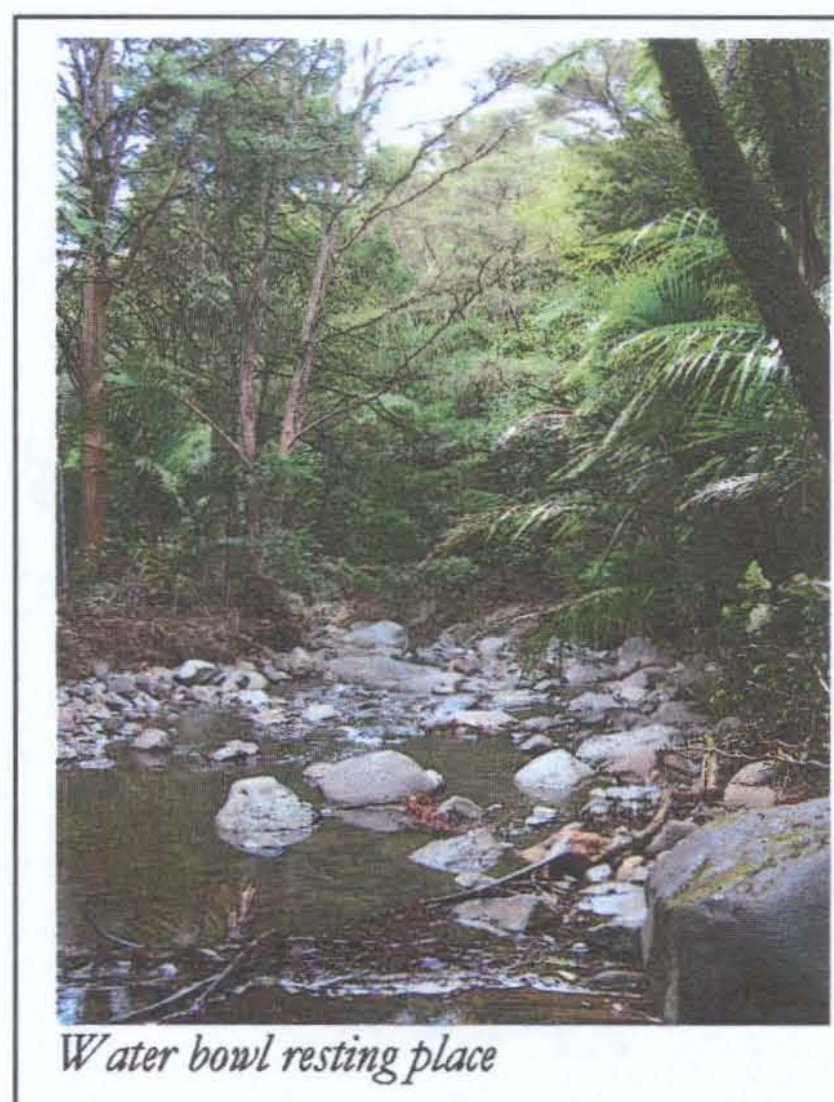
lid was missing and it was full of murky water and sticks, its feet bound by roots and dirt. I never expected to get it back. Only hope . . . The recovery sent shock waves reverberating throughout my body—an experience where I was shaken to my core, where memories came flooding in knowing in that moment my life was utterly changed forever. What I had buried so long ago had to be uncovered and shared ~ the voice of the stream silent no more. It was a profound realization and one I am still dealing with.

### ***Coromandel***

*June, 2006*

*Flowing waters . . .*

*You know the name,  
the sound of the land  
the singing of the waters -  
What is your name?*



*Water bowl resting place*

I return home to the waters that I so love. Their name is in my heart, the sound beats upon my soul. I know the name from journeys before, from many places ~ to many islands and beyond. *The Stream speaks:*

*I come from the high waters, emerging deep in the mountain to spring forth onto the earth and bring water to the land. Many are my colors. From the mist of the rainbow I am, From the waters of life I am . . .*

*I spring forth from the loins of mother to give life to you, to all the trees, and birth the memory . . . Deep are my memories, carried from other lands, embedded in the seed that grows into a tree, deep are my waters, for knowing is within you. The seed of gold, the seed of healing waters.*

*Who are your waters??*

Coromandel is home to waters that can be sipped straight from the stream. They say at night the little snail that lives under water comes out and glows with a faint light. They say this is how you know the water is healthy and clean, fresh and nourishing. Water such as this brings a memory to the soul and restoration to the body. It flows free and clear from the mountain top, through the bush, into the valley, and eventually out to the sea. It knows the way and holds the memory of all time . . .

Coromandel is home to glow worm, kauri, ponga, kowhai, and many others. The tracks are deep. To walk beside this stream is to walk into the unknown, the unknown within one's self and the unknown on the outside world. A vessel was buried deep within the earth beside the stream, left in an old place, a place of teaching. Last summer it came home. Intuition is the vessel . . . The bowl is water, literally and metaphysically. The physical water bowl was created by a friend in response to a pipe being stuck in his birth river, the Waikato. It is a place of deep feeling . . . He feels

“water is not a resource, it is a life principle, and to recognise that it is the ecologies and geology that defines and determines the ‘Mana’ of these waters . . . specifically ‘Waters of Aurum’ . . . ‘Waters of Gold’ . . . ‘Te Waioira’ . . . waters of divinity . . . the homeopathy of the natural mind . . . The mind I refer to is not the brain, but those aspects of our being . . . the emotional, the intelligence, centred by the heart. To pay respect to an open, a whole mind was to give the first consultation to our emotional body . . . our feeling . . . to feel and then to shape our way through life . . . gives us the essence of experience . . . confirmation as opposed to information . . . In this way the old knowledge of the ‘Way of the Water’ . . . to listen to the tides of the mind” (O'Donnell 2003, 14).

To walk beside these waters is to listen deeply, and to be in silence ~ complete, utter silence.

*Awe, reverence . . .*



And so I return to the garden—to the garden of knowing, to the garden of light . . . to the Garden of being. How could it be otherwise? Knowledge is embodied, literally embodied through experience, direct experience . . .

*“Water represents the lunar and the female, and it is a link between your place of birth and the lands to which you may have to go on your spiritual passage. It also represents that which is maternal and, of course, travel itself” (Murray, 73).*

*Alchemy . . . you are the alchemist.*

## *Dialogue 2*

~

### ***Women's Journeys – Women's Bodies***

*“Story is the mother of us all. First we wrap our lives in language and then we act on who we say we are. We proceed from the word into the world and make a world based on our stories”  
(Baldwin, 79).*

*“We record unspoken experience in the mind and body, but unless we can story it out, experience remains inside us shrouded like fog hanging over water. We may act on these unspoken tensions, but we act blindly . . . . Unarticulated experiences that are not allowed into the story can show up years later as trauma, disease, mental illness, or a midlife crisis. But when these same experiences are shifted into language and successfully worked through in the healing power of story, they lay the groundwork for transformative personal development” (Baldwin, 81–82).*

Women's journeys often embody a journey to wholeness and a healing process that unites the mind with body and spirit. As young girls lose their souls, and often their minds and creative expression during adolescence in their quest to find their place in the world, as they are asked to outgrow their innate knowing, so too are these qualities recovered in women's midlife journeys. There is a reclamation of a way of knowing that is innately tied to the cycles and rhythms of the earth, of the moon, and of the tides and seasons. They know the way to feeling our inner fire and healing our world (Pipher 1994; Bolen 1994; Christ 1995; Noble 1991). While this process is not solely the province of women, I am most interested in how women reclaim their inner knowing and the relationship to earth, how they begin to find the path back into the heart of their own being, and how this kind of learning can be utilized for transforming educational pedagogy. This is a spiral journey, taking the frame out of the box, taking the square classroom and returning the power of the circle, the power of knowing from one's own truth.

*To move into and be consumed by the creative Fire . . . the knowing in the Belly.*

“Anyone who has gone into the flames and been touched by the Goddess knows the many deaths the ego has to undergo in order to experience the uniqueness in oneself and in others. Learning to love is a life-long task. Only in an eternal moment can we experience our true identity. As we begin to understand who we are, we can begin to see the essence of others, an essence that is uniquely lovable.

“Leaving duality means living in paradox. Paradox is the core of wisdom and the core of the Goddess. Wisdom holds the balance of life/death, mind/body, masculine/feminine. By holding the balance of both, she allows them to transform into something new. Paradox, presence, and process are words we associated with the Goddess, she who ‘renews everything while herself perduring’” (Woodman and Dickson, 86).

In midlife I’ve experienced a crisis that has brought loss, a sense of grief and incredible upheaval. *An archetypal journey* . . . In my fortieth year I lost my footing and had to begin creating a new foundation—even getting to know who I was to be able to greet the ‘new’ woman I was becoming. A new journey had to begin, one which was quite unknown . . . and delve into the deepest, darkest depths. As Joyce Rupp explains,

“The sense of being lost and searching is a common experience for many in midlife. We become spiritual nomads, wandering . . . hoping to discover an elusive something . . . Nothing satisfies. We are left longing for some missing pieces we do not have and wonder if we will ever find. *Being lost propels us in the direction of discovery of new inner territory*. This process involves looking intently at our supposed securities (our old maps), exploring the story of who we are and how life is, and searching for the roads that will lead us forward. *It means trusting that we will find ourselves again* (itals mine)” (Rupp, 62–63).

It was painful at times with very few positive images of older women to guide, especially women in non-traditional roles espousing or even embracing the woman they could become. I had to learn to trust my intuition and pay attention to the little signs/synchronicities that would come along from time to time . . .

“How would it be different if the fertility of earth and women were celebrated as expressions of divinity and if women elders were appreciated as wisewomen” (Bolen, 65)?

“Since she [the Crone] has not been present in the culture, she has not been readily accessible to the conscious awareness of modern women. Without her, even the dynamic symbols of Virgin and Mother are distorted. The



Crone in a woman is that part of her psyche that is not identified with any relationship nor confined by any bond. She infuses an intrinsic sense of self-worth, of autonomy, into the role of virgin and mother, and gives the woman strength to stand on her own creative experience” (Woodman and Dickson, 134).

As a teenager I chose a creative path—walking the woodland trails, breathing in the dust of ancient nations, and learning about the deep separation of Us and Them . . . I was saddened by this, knowing somewhere, somehow, these dualities do not exist in our bones. I wondered how I could begin to reconcile my own knowing with outer reality . . . to begin my own healing.

“It is only by recognizing and healing the dualities that exist in ourselves that we can come to a true sense of interdependence with the rest of creation. We are just beginning to have some understanding of the interdependence of nature and all natural systems. If we pollute the earth, we are polluting ourselves; if we destroy the rain forests, the loss of oxygen affects every living thing. Weather patterns change; habitats change. This has always been true: over the millennia, the earth’s systems have changed dramatically for one reason or another. What is different now is that we are aware of such systems and are, therefore, compelled to take a conscious position towards them and towards ourselves” (Woodman and Dickson, 53).

As leaves grow and fall from a tree, so were my own perceptions required to change.

*“Leaves are verbs that conjugate the seasons”  
(Erllich as quoted in Brandeis, 77)*

“We cycle through the many seasons in our lives. We may favor the leafy green seasons, the lush fragrant seasons, but we also need to honor those seasons of change, of dryness, those seasons where we feel stripped bare. If we want to bring our whole self to the page, we need to explore our darkness, our shadow, as well as our light” (Brandeis, 77).

*The shadows came alive, I had to walk the dark trails and enter the Cave . . .*

“Looked at through the lens of a psychology that embraces the sacred, our woundings can deepen our growth. For woundings make us stop, shift, move in new directions, face what had been hidden. They prune us of our primal growth so that we can bear fruit . . .

These experiences, felt as woundings, led me to reflect long and hard on the place and purpose of suffering in our lives. My own experiences of wounding—physical, psychological, emotional, loss of status, prospects, friends, and what had been my place in the world—led me to understand

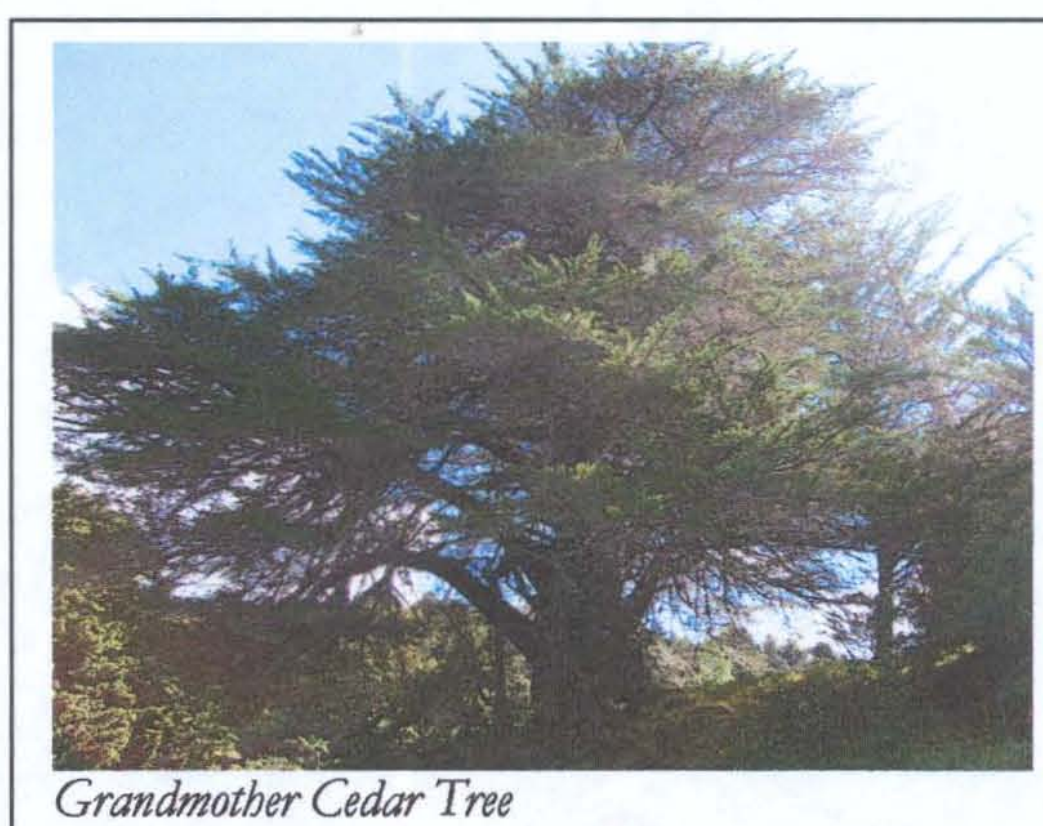
that in times of suffering, when you feel abandoned, perhaps even annihilated, new life is entering into time at levels deeper than your pain, in realities at once more subtle and more evolved" (Houston, 276).

*The pull of darkness was strong, the descent . . . learning through "la selva subterranea, the underground forest, the underworld of female knowing. It is a wild world that lives under this one. While there, we are infused with instinctive language and knowledge. From that vantage point we understand what cannot be so easily understood from the point of view of the topside world"* (Estes, 389).

### ***Waimatenui***

*January, 2007*

*~ excerpts from a letter to a friend (sent January 23, 2007)*



*Grandmother Cedar Tree*

The old journals, ten years of writing, travel, and research were found at Twin Bridges and that may seem like a paradox given what I've just written. It was a very powerful experience to see the tree where they had been left. I bushwhacked into the bush and found the place where all the journals and writings (save for the trip to Britain and a few notes . . .) were buried in 2000, swearing there would be no further writing. I've written to friends about this experience and my longing to return to see if anything was still there, to see my creative child again, even to find the place. All in all, there was a bag of tapes—which in the end I decided to leave and rebury (they were on the surface and the bag was visible), and a



spiral binding from one of the journals which I pulled out hoping to find some pages intact. The covers were still there, slightly moldy, but upon opening it learned that all the pages had been absorbed and replaced by dirt and a few fine roots. I left the rest . . . How appropriate . . . that all of that was transformed in the bosom of Papatuanuku, so lovingly held all these years to be reborn into something new, watched over by a grandmother cedar tree at the river . . . It was not easy to return, but quite necessary. I have often felt that any further writing would be preceded by a clearing . . . on many levels, that so much of the writing in these journals contained the words and thoughts of other people and I had to find my own way, my own voice . . .

“The forest, the labyrinth, the otherworld, the underworld, the sea, and the depths of the sea are all poetic and symbolic descriptions of how we perceive the unconscious as a realm . . . When we enter a forest phase in our lives, we enter a period of wandering and a time of potential soul growth. In the forest it is possible to reconnect with our own innate nature, to meet what we have kept in the shadows and what we have been kept from knowing or acknowledging about ourselves, or the personal and patriarchal world we inhabit. Here it is possible to find what we have been cut off from, to ‘remember’ a once vital aspect of ourselves. We may uncover a wellspring of creativity that has been hidden for decades. Here we may be attacked by criticism or abandoned to our worst fears. Most of all, once in the forest, we must find within ourselves whatever we need to survive” (Bolen, 148–149).

“In retrospect, it is easy to see that the loss of control, exhaustion, and illness that I suffered throughout the pilgrimage are the classic elements that mark the beginning of initiation. Historians of religion explain that the outwardly strong individual will not give up control and become open to revelation unless pushed to the brink. The rite of passage can be an ordeal that tests physical and psychological strength. Exhaustion and illness may also be an opening to transformation” (Christ, 75).

*Auckland*  
*July, 2006*

After days in the forest and walking beside the ocean where ancient stories are held, I return to the city—to the stench of belching cars and constant noise—walking past graffiti and navigating an endless sea of concrete. It is quite a shock after hearing birdsong in the

forest and listening to the stream and the waters that run there. What would I say now, at the end of the journey and on the edge of new beginning. Be patient, be kind, always have faith. Gratitude to the ancestors, and to the many friends and family who made this journey possible, who helped along the way. They are too numerous to mention and many would want to remain at the back anyway.

I walk the streets, city block after city block, returning again to the church built of kauri timbers that once comprised the ancient forest. The church is closed, but its modern counterpart is open for evensong. I enter and spend a few prayerful moments there, contemplating the stained glass windows depicting the arrival of foreign ships and missionaries with a “new” message. It is not so different from what I saw in Waikiki church during a spring class exercise. It’s a small place, this world, and very precious too.

I return to the Auckland Domain, seeking refuge in a very hectic world. Thankfully there are trees, open space, and birds to remind one of the goodness of life and the renewal found in a ‘natural’ place. It may be city, but I can see out into the harbour and the park is bordered by very old and gracious oak trees. Soon I will leave for Hawai‘i and I wonder what I will remember about this journey.

Before leaving Aotearoa I run into a poster with a speech by Chief Seattle: “This earth is precious...” While this speech remains controversial in some circles, it is a potent reminder of clear cuts in the Pacific Northwest forest and many years spent there, of a visit long ago to his grave to pay homage to a very brave man and visionary. It is the same here, after visiting the forest and the grove, the garden and the sea, walking alongside a stream that nourishes me and holds infinite treasure. This earth is always precious.

*This was a sojourn into urban and wild spaces, reconnecting with old places and friends I had not seen in a while, but had thought of often in my dreams. They were there to hold and tautoko, they were there to support and offer guidance, even a growling once in a while when I got out of bounds. Such is the nature of life when traveling to open spaces and exploring new territory, especially when putting closure to the old.*

*When I left New Zealand in February, 2000 I never really expected to return, but return I must, for it is also home and holds the place of the heart and the soul in a very ancient mystery. What, I cannot say, for that is a journey you must make, if you so choose, to find your own way and your own story within the mystery that is the beauty . . . that is you. I cannot hold it for you, nor would it be right to do so. Thank you for sharing this time together . . . .*

*Wishing you well on your journey.*

*Ka kite ano. Until we meet again . . .*

## *Interlude*

### *“Spirituality is story.*

*Since consciousness and language first claimed us, human beings have made up sacred stories to explain how something larger than ourselves created us and the world. Spirituality seems to be innate to human beings. If children are not told a spiritual story, they will quite confidently make up their own explanations. And just as society develops language, so society develops a spiritual story of its creation. The story of creation is the universal first story” (Baldwin, 193).*

Stories send us on Journeys, journeys of the heart, journeys of the spirit. There is no beginning and no end. Emerging from the dark into light, the story shapes itself as the journey unfolds and begins to expand into consciousness. How does one, how can one touch the land when moving through these places? How to enfold a story that is ethereal and yet concrete? Is the process of experiencing and creating story felt in the body or the mind—or both?

Stories expand our knowing, our known world and pull us into a realm of sharing and learning. Starting from the beginning, what do we create? What do we want to know? What is so important that we would embark upon a journey? Who or what seeks expression?

In the beginning . . .

### *Hawai’i*

*March, 2006*

Every day as I walk to and from school, I reflect on how the space I traverse is covered by asphalt and concrete, sheltered by buildings. The Ko‘olau mountains in the distance are an inspiration and this is a story that came one day on the way home:

*I long to walk in my bare feet on wild lands. I long to hear snow falling, the rising of spring, sap cracking in the trees as leaves spring to their new found life.*

*I long to sense with my whole body that which I have come to know through the language of silence, through intimate connection with the body of earth, through my own body—the cycles, rhythms of moon and tide, creativity and restructuring wholeness . . .*

*I long to see the stars and hold their wisdom in the palm of my hand, gently—ever so gently, for they are ancestors guiding me home.*

*I long to see the place within, the place of stillness where waters flow and creativity comes forth from the unknown, from mystery, wholeness . . .*

*I long to know . . .*

*I long to know wild lands.*

The waters of the Ko'olau mountains flow through the valley we know as Manoa. They come in as mist, as pouring rain . . . I often think of how water in this valley may have come from waters gathered in a land known as the Long White Cloud—Aotearoa New Zealand. Friends there sit beside a stream, as I do in Hawai'i and other places, listening every day—to the waters, to the birds, to the rhythm of life.

*Dialogue 3*

~

*Earthsong*

*The air, the earth . . . the wind, the water . . .*  
*Returns, returns, returns.*

*The air, the earth . . . the wind, the water . . .*  
*Returns, returns, returns.*

*The air, the earth . . . the wind, the water . . .*  
*Returns, returns, returns. . .*  
*(adapted from an old chant)*

***Auckland***

*February 18, 2008*

“When a man does not realize his kinship with the world,  
 he lives in a prison whose walls are alien to him.  
 When he meets the eternal spirit in all objects,  
 then is he emancipated, for then he discovers the fullest  
 significance of the world into which he is born; then  
 he finds himself in perfect truth, and his harmony  
 with the all is established.”

(Tagore as quoted in Cox, 15)

In desperation I return to the forest. Too many hours at the books and thinking  
 about odd bits of schoolwork and writing have put my body-mind out of balance. I feel  
 heartsick and long for home, for the lore of the forest.

Near where I live is a reserve with old kauri trees. Situated amongst urban sprawl sits  
 a placid native bush with walking trails. *Kauri*, your ancientness speaks of another time and  
 another land. Are these the children who remain? Who are left of the forest that sprawled  
 from Waipoua to the Coromandel and beyond? Are these the mokopuna of the  
 grandmothers?

Wind stirs, branches sway, a rushing . . . tui calls.  
 Beyond is water, beyond is the ever present warm weather call of cicada.  
 Until the rain falls.



Silence is the language, although there is a distinct hum of languages past and those present. Can you hear the birds call? Can you hear the wind sing? Can you hear the waters roaring by as the tides rush in and out? Yes, ocean is nearby and these steep hills are testament to other trails and other times, to tangata whenua. I wonder who was here.

Deep reflection brings memories . . . . I often wonder why I go into these hills—or any hills at all. Being out of balance and then by sitting still and listening, regain balance. Is there a harmony/harmonic there?



*Hokianga harbour*

*“It’s about caring for the land and the people. When I look out to the mountains of Te Whare Tapu (The Sacred Shrine of Ngapuhi), just as my ancestors would have done, it is with great love and reverence that brings a sense of contentment and peace. That is the way it is with Maori here. The land and the people come first and there is a great love for both. That is where our strength lies . . . You cannot explain it so much in words, because it’s a feeling and it comes from the heart. Papatuanuku, the earth, is our turangawaewae. Her seeds are our taonga, to be cherished. We are the caretakers, and it is up to each one of us to protect and nurture her for the future generations to come” (Probett, 2001).*

### ***Koanga Gardens***

*Winter Solstice*

*June, 2006*

I attend a seed hui . . . where upon a wall is inscribed:

*“The extinction of biological diversity is inextricably lined with the destruction of cultural diversity. With the loss of native cultures, there is also disappearing the vital and important knowledge of a way of living in balance with the earth and the value system in which it is*

*encoded. To approach the process of restoration, it is essential to learn to see the earth through native eyes" (anonymous).*

A group of dedicated people has spent the winter solstice weekend discussing how to save the last of the heirloom fruit trees in the Kaipara harbour region. This harbour is one of the largest in the world and the area is vast. One of the Koanga Gardens founders is a master gardener with years of seed saving experience and this work is her passion. Some weeks earlier she had gone through her heirloom seed inventory and identified a list of “motherless” seeds. She walks the group through this list plant by plant asking who can mother some of these seeds—who can make the time and space to plant these old varieties so they can live for another year and be in existence for future generations. The list is many pages long. Some seeds are adopted and some are, after difficult and time consuming discussions, laid to rest knowing this may be the end of the line for particular vegetable varieties in New Zealand.

The previous evening the group gathered for supper, partaking of a soup made of heirloom beans, a veritable variety of color, shapes, and sizes. The discussion goes back and forth between old Maori lore, local history, and organic gardening in general. It is a privilege to be among this very dedicated group of seed activists. They know time is running out . . . the seeds are precious, vital to family and community well being, innately passing on ancestral knowledge of the land from which they came and the gardeners who cared for them.

The hui ends with a prayer around the solstice fire and a shared lunch, then everyone is on their way. I move on to the forest and the ancient ones who gather there. Another time will tell whether I am able to return to the garden.





*Mother seed garden*

*Sowing the seed,  
my hand is one with the earth.*

*Wanting the seed to grow,  
my mind is one with the light.*

*Hoeing the crop,  
my hands are one with the rain.*

*Having cared for the plants,  
my mind is one with the air.*

*Hungry and trusting,  
my mind is one with the earth.*

*Eating the fruit,  
my body is one with the earth”  
(Berry as quoted in The Family Farm Project).*

~ ~ ~

“*My body is one with the earth.*” The ability to touch the larger universe and non-linear time allows the possibility to touch our own wild nature, to reawaken our dulled senses and come fully alive—the possible human, full of compassion, love, and knowing of one’s divine nature, our given birthright.

In *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, Clarissa Pinkes Estes claims this wild nature is instinctual and part of our healing. She talks about how when we dull our senses, we also

dull our wild nature, speaking of the loss of the wild, the “loss of the sense of the soul” as a form of initiation.

“The harm to nature is concomitant with the stunning of the psyches of humans. They are not and cannot be seen as separate. When one group talks about how wrong wild is, and the other group argues that the wild has been wronged, something *is* drastically wrong. In the instinctive psyche, the Wild Woman looks out on the forest and sees a home for herself and all humans” (254).

~ ~ ~

Modern life is imbued with the language of busyness, of distraction and separation from a direct experience with our natural world. “Most of us lead lives in cities and therefore have only the two-dimensional view of nature portrayed by photographs or on the television screen” (Swan 12). We tend to lose touch with the natural world, with the earth’s natural language of silence, often knowing instead a separation of body and mind, nature and spirit disrupted through the metamorphosis of natural landscapes, the placement of human architecture, and by the technological, mechanical voice of passing cars and planes flying overhead . . . no longer seeing the stars in their entirety, or hearing running water, or wind blowing without interruption from the noise of our modern day world. Our daily perceptions are altered, changing the landscape of time and of knowing.

What happens when this interaction, this natural interplay between humanity and nature is broken, or dulled by the lack of space in which to contact the integral, wild human nature? How would we feel if we knew our innate connections could not possibly be replaced? “What,” as Theodore Roszak says,

“If we looked, what we would find is that a tremendous number of us are moving through the world in a condition of profound grief for what is happening to the natural environment around us . . . and we have not even got the language to express how deep our grief is, for what we see happening and know is happening around us. What if we know that the species are dying and nobody has to tell us” (*Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Self*)?

What if your knowing of connection was as deep as your knowing of loss and separation? How would you deal with that? How would you deal with a tremendous force that has the capacity to move one beyond all known boundaries and limits?

Joanna Macy, a social activist and pioneer in spiritual ecology, has worked extensively with the despair and grief that comes with this sense of loss and the work needed to reclaim connection. She writes through the lens of the Buddhist tradition and general systems theory. “Despair is tenaciously resisted because it represents a loss of control, an admission of powerlessness. Our culture dodges it by demanding instant solutions when problems are raised” (18). Despair challenges our sense of boundaries, our sense of the known and seemingly controllable world.

We assume boundaries exist because they are within the realm of what we can see and feel, within the real of what we are told is ‘real’. Our perceived boundaries can limit us; however they are the edges where play begins, the edges between the knowable and unknowable, seen and unseen, the place where change can begin to occur—where we can return fully to our sense of community, of connectedness, of belonging and relationship with one another and our natural world. Our sense of personal ecology begins to come into a more harmonious balance.

Macy claims there are positive, loving ways to bring about action and change to embrace life. Her theoretical foundations for the *Work That Reconnects* assert the following:

- “1. This world, in which we are born and take our being, is *alive*.
2. Our true nature is far more ancient and encompassing than the separate self defined by habit and society.
3. Our experience of pain for the world springs from our interconnectedness with all beings, from which also arise our powers to act on their behalf.
4. Unblocking occurs when our pain for the world is not only intellectually validated, but experienced.
5. When we reconnect with life, by willingly enduring our pain for it, the mind retrieves its natural clarity.

6. The experience of reconnection with the Earth community arouses desire to act of its behalf' (58–60).

Her stated goal for this work is “to reframe a person’s pain for the world as evidence of their interconnectedness with the web of life, and hence of their power to take part in its healing” (n pag). She explains this journey of moving through our sense of loss and pain, grief and despair has the capacity to move one to action and bring about radical change. In the Tibetan tradition, there is a prophecy that speaks of two weapons necessary for transformation—compassion and insight. “These two weapons of the Shambhala warrior represent two essential aspects of the Work that Reconnects. One is the recognition and experience of our pain for the world. The other is the recognition and experience of our radical empowering interconnectedness with all life” (Macy, 61). It is part of our ancestral memory of belonging, the ancient language of time. Always present, leading us forever on the journey home.

“Since the earliest times people have recognized the presence of spirit in this world. The very essence of human nature is spirit and we have always experienced a desire to connect with the spiritual essence of things. We are linked on every level, both physical and spiritual. It is our sacred duty to recognize and treasure these bonds” (Harvey and Cochrane, 10–11).

How does one recognize what is sacred? How does one recognize what qualities are to be treasured and lovingly cared for? Kathleen Norris writes of her journey in her spiritual autobiography, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*, where she had the privilege of sitting with Benedictine monks at their monastery. In their communal exploration of what is sacred and holy she says, “What sets monks apart from the rest of us is not an overbearing piety but a contemplative sense of fun. They know, as Trappist monk Matthew Kelly reminds us, that ‘you do not have to be holy to love God. You only have to be human. Nor do you have to be holy to see God in all things. You only have to play as a child with an unselfish heart’”



(215). Perhaps it is the innocent heart of the child that touches most closely our own divine nature.

Mary Rose O'Reilly, who chronicles her own spiritual journey through her experiences with Quaker and Buddhist communities, as well as an apprenticeship as a shepherd writes,

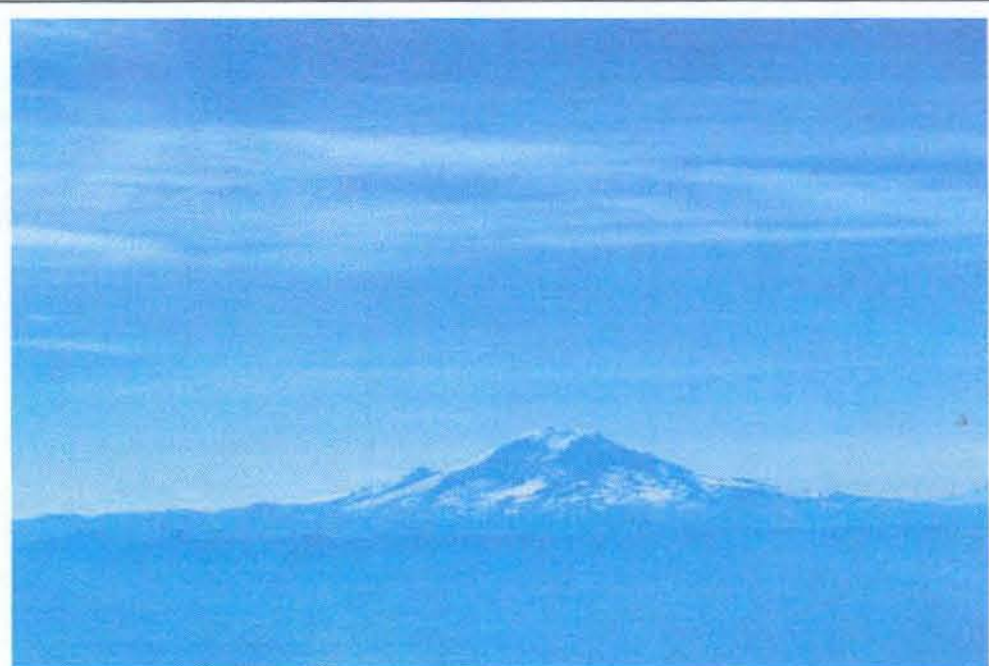
“Tibetan Buddhists tell this story: Naropa’s student Marpa, after laboriously collecting manuscript after manuscript in years of study in India, lost them overboard on his return journey home. He sorrowed, but then discovered that he had no need of them. He had only taken notes on what he did not understand. What he did understand had become a part of him . . . In that spirit I leave these notes behind me on the trail. What we write about is what we do not understand” (317).

Perhaps it is what I do not know that drives me to explore and create . . . Perhaps it is the spirit of my own innate desire and longing for connection that brings me closer to a place where separation can no longer exist. As a person who has experienced separation, healing involves the journey of being, of coming into balance with inner and outer worlds, of acknowledging the pain and grief that comes with separation and loss, and moving into a world where connections can be realized and fully embodied. *Touching the seed* . . .

Home.

*E nga mana, e nga reo, e Nga Hau e Wha.  
Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.*

*To the honoured, to the speakers, to the people of the four winds.  
Greetings, greetings, greetings to us all.*



*Mount Rainier*



*Ruapehu*



*Susquehanna River*



*With gratitude to the ancestors . . .*

***Manoa***

*Full Moon, Harvest time*

*September 16, 2005*

My name is Judith and I come from all over . . .

It's unfinished business. You ask where I come from . . . There is no easy answer . . .

The challenge is to focus and explain/detail a story I am still distilling and integrating.

I was born to the woods, and have an affinity for nature and the high mountains. My mountains are Rainier near Seattle, Washington and Ruapehu on the north island of Aotearoa New Zealand. I come from a place of two rivers—Susquehanna and Chenango in what are now the states of New York and Pennsylvania. The places where I stand are the mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania—whose original name is lost to me, but the streams are familiar . . . the land of my ancestors . . . the Pacific Northwest coast . . . and Aotearoa New Zealand, also the land of my ancestors. All are significant in shaping my journey.

One and half years ago I watched a beloved green space with beautiful full grown maple and walnut trees, a family of squirrels and resident red cardinals and other precious birds plus deer being clear cut for a church parking lot. Witnessing this desecration of one of the last green spaces on the edge of an urban Illinois university town brought home full circle a journey from east to west, to Pacific islands, and back east again. It was full circle, in the sense that I had been on the land since I was a child, immersed in western culture and educational paradigms, joined with an elder and a group of people to journey around the world—a journey that propelled me into Aotearoa New Zealand and indigenous culture, lifeways, senses, feelings, time, space, and living. It is an experience and dichotomy I am still addressing.

For five years I journeyed between Seattle and New Zealand trying to figure out what the hell I'd done in the United States, Peru, Israel, India, Egypt and of course, Aotearoa. Just what the hell was it all about, studying sacred sites, everyday life, meeting people from diverse backgrounds—some very different from my own with varying world views and ways of looking at life. It would be easy to say that this was a journey about working across cultures—both in the United States and New Zealand . . . It would be easy to say that studying Maori culture and the complexities of learning, being, living in an indigenous paradigm that was attempting at that time to include people from many different walks of life (I honestly have no idea where they are now . . .) was a challenge, when in fact it has been life changing. I'll be honest—it has been utterly life changing. Looking beyond the surface to rivers cutting deep . . .

I don't like to talk about it—being here in Manoa has pointed out to me quite succinctly that my experiences traveling and working with an elder, being in New Zealand, coming home over and over again, and feeling alienated on my own land, the land of my ancestral birth has made quite clear that my experiences are of a certain time and time frame, and it's time for updating.

Where am I now? Standing witness to the clear cut and feeling the pain of the land, the acute physical visceral and emotional pain of being wiped clean brought a journey home to Pennsylvania and my own people to connect in a way I had never done before. What I had learned as a child and young adult was really ok and I didn't have to turn my back on it—it was really part of the full circle and spiral nature of life, of a maturing woman living in two paradigms. Out of this came the realization that in bridging two cultures there is some

resolution, whereas before I had felt the distinct split between the two—and still do some days . . . Perhaps a semblance of peace.

When I was last in New Zealand I buried ten years worth of work, writings, tickets, ledgers of time and space, stone and wood, into the warm womb of the north island soul—interestingly enough at the convergence of two rivers. It still pains my soul to think about it. I had gathered information, quotes, writings, etc from other people and my own reflections/written recordings/stories (although my own work was not so much in the first person . . .) in an effort to compile and publish a book about the journeys to sacred sites and other places—both internal and external. I was struggling with the question of whether to finish writing the book and seek publication or to set it aside and learn to live what I had learned, what I felt had been passed on from elders, children, every day people, and being on/with the land.

You ask me where I come from.

All over.

Islands are all over. *Spiritual islands, physical islands, creative islands* . . .

I still rail against the binary split in current culture between self and other, insider and outsider, victim/survivor and perpetrator. I grow weary of the discourse, the talk between who is in and who is out, are you indigenous or are you not, and all the politics, conflicts, and machinations that go with that. Which ancestor would I cut off to claim one or the other? It's an innate challenge to existing structures, simply because in walking the split so deeply and profoundly I came to realize that I have very little tolerance for ambiguity and I'm impatient for change. Idealist, realist, cognizant of changing paradigms and looking for kindred souls. And I know I have to have patience because the discussions/considerations

are complex, wrought with paradox and often very personal. There are no easy answers. In making a conscious choice to return to academia I struggled with knowing there would be very specific frameworks and discussions to deal with, questioning if this journey would serve the creative purpose, the heart of the matter. And in the end . . . who will know.

So yes, I'd like this initial paper/inquiry to be something nice, sugar coated with academic language and easy to construct into an acceptable thesis for MA work, but as you have most likely sensed I am compelled to work outside the box and learn how to frame the work, sensibly, inside an acceptable framework to fulfill the requirements. I ask you honestly, is there a way to nurture one's passion, learn in a fruitful honest way, and accomplish personal/academic goals? This is in many ways a very personal journey, and I'm not sure, nor do I wonder if it is necessary to remain objective.

Two Springs ago I had a vision of creating a narrative video. I thought I was dead up until that point, that nothing would ever come flowing forth again . . . It's been a healing, all this time away and going home again. Long, dark energy, draining, and finally being refilled with the spirit, the vision of life to co-create a story of the people and land who touched so deeply and knowingly or unknowingly facilitated transformation—artists, writers, gardeners, and village makers/creators working toward a new paradigm, life-sustaining. Record their story in their own words, if they are willing, and have a record/story to pass on to the children . . . It's complex and remains entirely up to spirit as to whether this will come to pass or is best left for another time . . .

It's not a easy journey, I'll be honest. If I were to write in an academic way, a truly detached-subjective way then I feel there would be something missing. So I know there has to be a middle ground. It's a changing time.

From my grandmothers and mother I received the spirit of a strong woman and it is this spirit that keeps me alive. I go with the blessing of my grandmother and know there are also the ancestors to keep in mind.

Where two rivers meet has been my life's journey. Distilling, meeting, navigating, integrating, composting, gardening—it's very active as process and paradigm. I'm keenly interested in who's working on the cutting edge of bringing people together and breaking down barriers—whether perceived or real—that keep ideas, feelings, etc apart from one another. That was one reason why I was drawn to this program.

Now I live by a stream and I listen to, for it's song everyday. From the Pacific to one side of the other . . . informing, reminding, knowing there is an obligation to the past, as well as working toward the future, remain standing in, and on foreign and native soil.

It is poignant, painful, restorative, refreshing . . .

Water. Running, flowing, breaking . . .

Waves of ocean over mind, heart, soul.

It's been along time since I've written a story like this. My life is divided into two parts—the time that came before, when I was struggling with identity and a place to come home—and now integrating and gestating. River, ocean, island, mountain, sea—all connected. I explained to friends that I felt pregnant, just as pregnant as with a child, now birthing . . . Weekends are a luxury when I can write like this, up in the middle of the night, walking with the stars and the land, lore of the ancestors. Before leaving Aotearoa in 2000 I was compelled to be constantly on the go; now I'd rather sit and see this child grow up, this innate creative child, working on the tides of the moon as her ancestors did, late into the night, awaiting dawn.

Hopefully it will come one day soon . . .



*Japanese garden, UH Manoa*



*With all due respect, and asking permission of the ancestors,  
the grandmothers . . . to walk this trail gently.*

### ***Revisiting Definitions***

*Epistemology* → *Knowledge or knowing* → *Ontology*

***“epistemology*** *noun*

*the theory of knowledge, esp. with regard to its methods, validity, and scope. Epistemology is the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion.*

***knowing*** *noun*

*the state of being aware or informed.*

***ontology*** *noun*

*the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being.”*

(Oxford American Dictionary, Apple Computer 2005)

### ***Hawai‘i***

*September, 2005 – Epistemology in class*

*“Epistemology refers both to the theory of knowledge and theorizing knowledge, including the nature, sources, frameworks, and limits of knowledge” (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, 57).*

*“Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge” (Meyer, 146).*

The weekly seminar readings for September 15th by noted Pacific scholars David Welchman Gegeo and Karen Ann-Watson Gegeo, Manulani Aluli Meyer, Subramani, and Stephen Winduo raise significant questions. To hear epistemology stated as a theory simply put my hair on end. Knowledge is not a theory, rather it is a practical experience, one embedded in every day events and conversations/realizations. Perceptive reality, one might say—beyond the senses and fully informed by the senses. While Meyer openly acknowledges in her notes on Hawaiian epistemology that she is privileging terms used in academia as a way to help support her work and have her ideas be more accessible, I feel Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo are using terms and theory to distance themselves from the article’s content and people they are describing.

So I ask,       Is the academy a hegemonic structure in indigenous epistemology?  
                   How is knowledge created and shared within a privileged 'elite'?  
                   Does the hegemonic structure ever truly move outside itself?  
                   How are indigenous people and paradigms included with and by their  
                   own definition/self-determination/structure?

To "...think in light...(Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, 76)," to place value one's own knowing, as a form of empowerment and growth . . .

"All knowledge is subjective knowledge in Kwara'ae: there can be no detachment of the knower from the known as in mainstream Anglo-epistemology" (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, 62).

Some of these questions are never answered within the scope of my inquiry. They sit as guiding lights for another time . . . another space . . . . While I understand the authors have privileged an academic publication as one form of communication, one must ask if this use of language and the privilege of knowing—of knowing an academic hierarchy and using this elite dialogue to explain and examine indigenous paradigms, as well as the structure provided by the publication source, truly serves the community.

To acknowledge that two very different systems of knowledge and creating/maintaining knowledge can coexist and perhaps enhance one another is a very humbling thought. Initially I was very angry about having to read about indigenous knowledge in written form completely out of context with the projects and ideas/experiences described in the articles. Over the past couple days I have come to realize that as Subramani says in his article *Emerging Epistemologies*, "There are significant changes in consciousness, a new phase of research and scholarship in the region (1)," and also as he says "The great challenge for Pacific scholars, intellectuals, artists is to innovate paradigms that would energise Pacific ways of thinking and doing things so that Pacific societies can exist as creative communities among other communities (3)." So I think and feel it is important to reexamine the role of academic and grassroots enterprises in realizing and facilitating this process of change/innovation.

I am also intrigued with Steven Winduo's reference to "living cultural memory (1)."

Although I do not understand his article I can relate to the experience of living what you know and drawing upon an engaged visceral practice with learning and knowledge that is continually evolving rather than keeping knowledge as an abstract, objective, distanced form.

My own trail/journey has been utterly transformative in this regard. Initially I was quite puzzled and skeptical when confronted with indigenous ways of knowing. Now it's an ongoing challenge to reconcile my lens of origin with new perceptions and feelings, often resulting in what I can only term as 'hybrid' epistemologies—knowing and knowledge centered in many different paradigms emerging from and toward the unknown. So in this manner I celebrate the dialogues/conversations/projects that are coming out/being created. There is movement—whether it is publications in scholarly journals, or engaging in a debate or lecture at a gathering or in a classroom, or partaking in a street corner/email chat about the latest news. By sharing diverse epistemological views and practices/lifeways something is moving forward and hopefully enhanced within the larger web.

*"Signposts exist along the way  
to help us understand who we are."  
(Hereniko, 407)*

*Decolonizing Language*

~

*An Archeology of Form**Coromandel**July 8, 2006*

A conversation with a friend reveals another kind of language, one different from what I've heard in class:

"By whose authority . . . ?" he asks.

*Seed stories . . .*

"potency  
|  
polarity  
this                      that

*information — confirmation  
communication — communion  
implosion ~ explosion*

*feminine & masculine spirals*

*body, mind*

*The hills of    gold  
                     silver  
                     mercury  
                     inner knowing."*

Dominion, the idea of ownership . . . is diffused with this kind of language. It is the challenge placed back, returned, where challenge is understood to be an honoring, a sign of respect.

Evening tide, time . . .

ruru is calling . . .

Inside us ancestors,  
inside us islands and archipelagoes,  
inside us archaeology,  
Inside us many colors of people,  
places and spaces  
connecting the tides of history.

*Interlude*

~

*Waiting**Auckland**February, 2008*

Definitions are part of the maps and signposts along the trail. By definition a thesis or portfolio project is conceived one year and completed the next, however this was not to be the case with this project. Conception and pregnancy have their own rhythm and tide . . . just as the moon tides do, just as knowledge and the accumulation of experience take time—sometimes more than expected. This movement of classroom “theory” to “working in the field” to being “part of a community” has challenged my conceptions of knowledge and being—the essence of epistemology and ontology. . . Even writing this text challenged what I know and believe—have been trained to do. Review is constant . . .

When I first sat down in August, 2006 to begin describing the research the question arose as to whether I could specifically include the name of the Coromandel stream where I had so often visited, one of the intense places of learning on the journey. A quick phone call to a kaumatua confirmed my doubt. His request was to contact a kuia in the area to explain my intentions and ask permission for the site to be identified. With this in mind the writing could go no further until this request was honoured.

“If we are to be soul makers, we must not reject the idea of the womb . . .  
In the spiritual world, authentic life is born out of silence and waiting”  
(Toor as quoted in Kidd, 149).

Winter became Spring. I continued to work around the edges, going home to the States in November to take more photos of the mill site/stream and research my “homeland”/culture of origin, and reading books on spirituality, transformation, and women’s journeys.



Waiting many months reading/thinking until the brain was full and could contain no more. Eventually having to set “knowledge”, specifically book knowledge aside and breathe with the moment as I waited for experience and knowing to collide, to reveal themselves through the journey. This was the first time I had to set everything aside and become like a cocoon—to allow everything I had experienced to be sloughed away and held lightly—to shine in/through the darkness, to experience being still. I was puzzled and confused—continuing to try and reconcile academic deadlines with natural creative rhythms was pointless. Sometimes you just gotta ‘go with the flow’. As Sue Monk Kidd shares in *When the Heart Waits*:

A young monk once asked Abba Moses, one of the desert fathers, how to find true spiritual growth. ‘Go sit in your cell,’ said the monk, ‘it will teach you everything.’ Somehow we’ve lost this important secret in spiritual life—that in ‘stayed-ness,’ as George Fox called it, we find the realm of transformation. In the stayed-ness of waiting we find everything we need in order to grow. Suspended upside down in the heart of the question, we touch the sacred places of real becoming” (17).

The kuia’s call, the opportunity to meet and request permission to proceed did not happen, however the tautoko came in another way. In a way I am thankful she didn’t return my call. Not being able to meet meant I couldn’t name the stream where I go or write about the history of the area, only refer to it in a general manner, however in the resulting stillness I had to learn a new way of Being . . . The mind was relieved of its duty to produce and think, constantly think and critique . . . I had time to watch the spring flowers, leaves bursting forth on the trees, the movement of sunsets and vibrant colors on the horizon, tracking moon through her moods and phases . . . looking for the Southern Cross in the deep of night. Doing “nothing” the body slows down, absorbing, sinking, composting, realizing, breathing in the ethers of experience until there *is* no more knowledge, only a realization in the bones. I could simply Be.

*First quarter moon to last quarter — living, breathing, being.*

*Last quarter moon to new moon — subside and rest.*

*New moon to first quarter — plant and receive the seed, the fruits of your labor.*

Life is a dance, a circle unending.

Knowledge planted in one garden will grow in another.



*Moon over Parnell, Auckland*

***My Help Is in the Mountain***

*My help is in the mountain  
Where I take myself to heal  
The earthly wounds  
That people give me  
I find a rock with sun on it  
And a stream where the water runs gentle  
And the trees which one by one give me company.  
So must I stay for a long time  
Until I have grown from the rock  
And the stream is running through me  
And I cannot tell myself from one tall tree.  
Then I know that nothing touches me  
Nor makes me run away.  
My help is in the mountain  
That I take away with me.  
(Wood as quoted in Anderson, 157)*

*Waters Heal*  
~  
*In My Mother's House . . .*  
~

In my mother's house are myths and secrets.  
Ka aroha ki a koe . . .

*New Jersey*  
*November, 2007*

In my mother's house are artifacts of other lives, genealogy, and lives unlived. Moving from a storage space in Washington State to travel to the East coast I encounter ghosts of ages past, mountain ranges, and long lost loves. These are the mountains I hold dear and know so well. Within them dwell the tears of the streams I walked as a child and since childhood have wandered to many other streams as well.

I know not why I wandered from my mother's house, safe as I was in the womb—only that one cannot hold an embryo between the legs and perhaps I was destined to go—to be the one who wandered so far away from home.

Forty years of moon tides later I returned shattered and wondering why I had ever left. The cave that held the sun also held the daughter and she walked on . . . When I think of where I have been, it was only where I wanted to go . . . past and present are the same. In this vein Clarola Pinkes Estes talks about how “in the time of the great matriarchies, it was understood that a woman would naturally be led to the underworld, guided there and therein by the deep powers of the feminine. It was considered part of her instruction . . . for her to gain this knowledge through firsthand experience. The nature of this descent is the archetypal core of both ‘The Handless Maiden’ fairy tale and the Demeter/Persephone myth” (412–413). The water/sea trails, the mountains, and the vast spaces that span them constitute part of my underworld and ongoing learning . . . In time I walk the north shore of

Aotearoa wandering again and looking, this time on another journey. We wander all the time, my family and I . . .

Upon my return to New Jersey I ask my mother for the whakapapa from Maine to the west coast of the United States to New Zealand. She walks me through the old trails and people and places I have not known, although some of the names are familiar. It is my grandfather's line and shelters stories of two brothers from a family of eleven children—two of his uncles who went west from the coast of Maine to arrive in San Francisco, we know not how. One stayed in the United States and one sailed the ocean and settled, presumably, in the Hokianga around 1900. I ask for one name and get a book filled with nine generations descending out of England across the planet. What a journey . . . for all of them.

Water connects in old ways.

Sometimes I feel as if I am walking the trails of the ancestors to pick up what they have forgotten, or more importantly, what I am supposed to remember. It's like an old tide seeping in between the timbers on an ancient ship making sure the sail is set straight in the right direction. Some times I wonder why they even send me at all—or I deign to listen, as if the ancestors voices were silent.

On an old journey to New Zealand (circa mid-late 1990s) my sisters and I were standing on a deck overlooking the Hokianga harbour. Their mihi was go home and look again—look for the old ones, the ones you are descended from. So I went home and asked my mom. At that time she thought our relations were on the South Island and that's all she knew. In August, 2006 during our last night together she pulled out an old photo album with 'Kaikohe' and a Maori whare on the front cover. "These are photographs from a journey taken by your great aunt around 1960 when she went to see relatives in New Zealand," she

explained. I nearly fell over. I said, “Mom, do you know that Kaikohe is on the North Island, that I was through there not two weeks ago, and this is an area where I’ve been going for over ten years and you mean to tell me we have cousins there?” Case closed.

I’m still waiting to go north, for a time when it may be possible to meet my relations. Mom’s been working on genealogy for over twenty years now—called out by the ancestors I believe—and she’s full of stories and travels to various places. She’s been through light and dark and has learned the way through some of the old trails, with many more to be revealed as the ancestors wish. They say there was a time when the women would lead. Perhaps some of this wisdom has been passed on to her daughter . . .

### ***First Waters***

First waters are of the sound of a mill and a stream that runs beside it.  
First waters are of a mother’s womb and her loving heartbeat,  
the space that carries the child into the stream of life . . .

*“The heart is a powerful symbol of life and desire.  
Its steady rhythmic flow begins even in the womb and is  
equal to the dance and pulse of life itself . . .*

*“My heart. My mother. My heart. My mother. My heart of my becoming”  
(Ellis, 46).*



*Waters Heal – Segue*  
~  
*In My Grandmother's House . . .*

*Pennsylvania*  
*November, 2007*

Yesterday up in the library tracking ancestors and ancient places, names I've heard for years, places I've been over and over again—through story, through people, through dreaming . . .

*It is a gift to know where you come from and who your people are.*

I felt this strongly today, especially talking with grandmother and hearing the old stories all over again. I love hearing them—always have. She could tell them a thousand times and I would still listen. They are precious, golden—linking people and places together—many lines, many people. I especially like the one about the Mohawk grandmother, but no one will tell me much, perhaps because they know very little about her. They only say she was here around the time of the French and Indian wars and that they were Tories. In other words, they were on the wrong side of the family political fence.

I have been especially interested this journey about the old mill site and its history—its physical history and the people connected to it. For the first time I'm visiting the historical society looking at books and old maps. It is weird in a way. I suppose because I always heard my family tell stories about how people were connected to one another, what their stories were, and how the families moved from one generation to the next . . . New England to Pennsylvania, and England, France, and Germany before that . . . stories often repeated traveling through the valley or out wandering to old historical sites in the area, especially when visiting the local cemeteries to pay our respects to those who had gone before . . . It seemed odd to read it in books, and frustrating too, because I recognize the

place names but only remember where a few are. Sad, because my grandmother, now ninety-five is one of the last living persons who knew the people and stories of the older generation and her memory is going. Matamua . . . potiki . . . The story goes on.

*Crossing worlds.*

Going through old family papers and photographs with her the past week has brought back vivid memories of a childhood connected to place and people, generations of people and perhaps this is what I seek. She asked if genealogy is important in New Zealand and I tried to explain to her as best I could about the importance of older and younger, male and female lines, descent and ascent plus junior and senior lines—plus relationship. What came out was that I feel comfortable there in some respect because of what this family shared growing up about all the families in the region—up and down the valley—and our relationship to them—our ongoing relationship through blood, marriage, and so on. It was a learning, an ongoing teaching about connection and relationship through the generations.

She told me tonight that everybody was related. The man that built our family house, the house that fed four generations, body and soul . . . had the mill at the stream where we all played as kids. These were my first relationships with nature, an ongoing teaching through the seasons. These are the stories I have heard all my life—they are ‘food’ for my soul and help sustain me wherever I go, a touchstone from this valley and the mill site that now extends to several places around the world, most notably at a Coromandel stream and people there too. Water winds its way through two streams and finds its way to the ocean where it connects all . . .

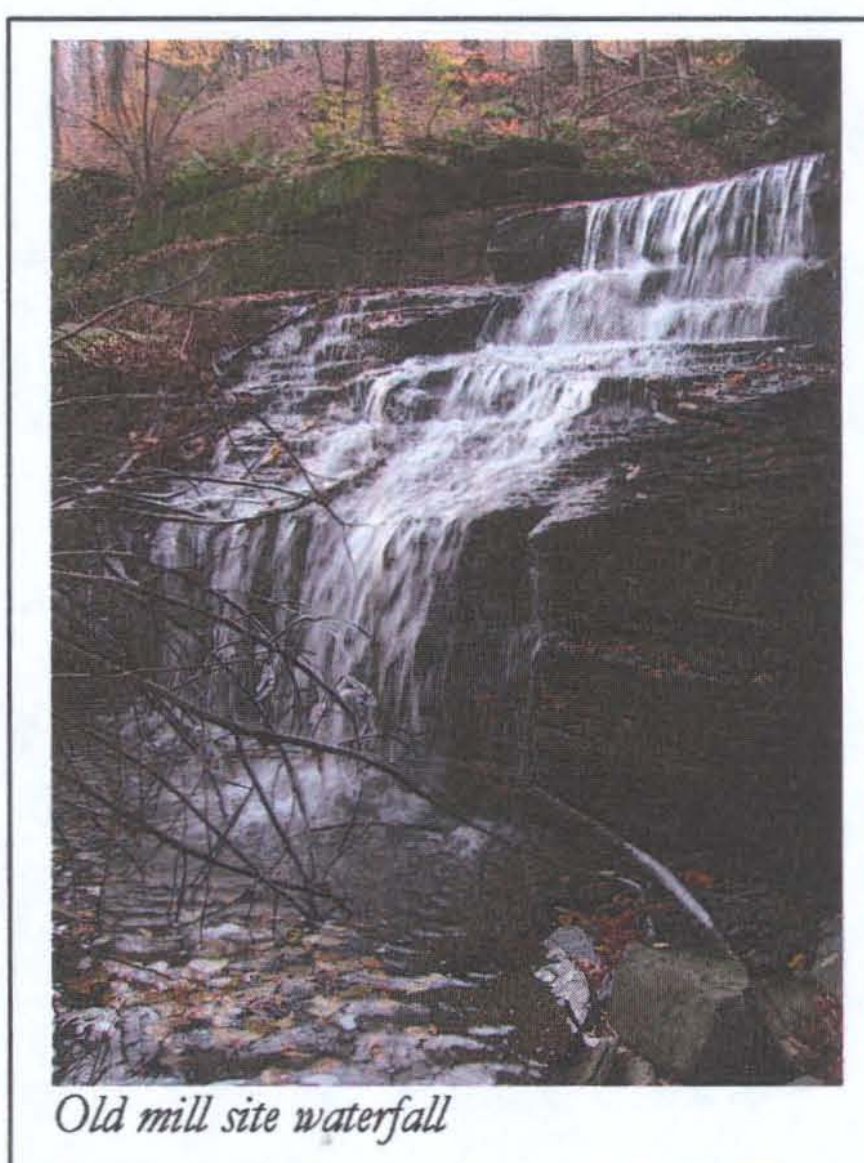
Connects all . . .

Rainbows of the world, through water vapor and blood . . .

The Susquehanna runs to the Atlantic, Coromandel to the Pacific.



I have been unable to find the name of the stream here in Pennsylvania, but surely someone will know, especially the old name.



*Old mill site waterfall*

I am also interested in the old history of the area, pre-European contact, and have often wondered if the waterfall at the stream is a special place. It's the only waterfall that I know of in the valley, although I am told there were other mill sites around. Was it a special place for the indigenous people? Why was I drawn there? I know when I first left the area as a teenager and went away it was my sacred, special place, a place I would draw upon in my heart and memory for renewal and strength, for comfort and reassurance. It was familiar and known in a world that was unfamiliar and expanding. A grounding stone and (I know now . . .) the healing power of water. It was always home and still is. The sound of these waters still sing in my heart and I remember as a child walking until I was soaked and satiated . . . the trees carry the stories and know the tales of my youth, the dreams shared. In summer she is cloaked with leaves; in winter—now, revealed. It is something to see and walk around the old places that have connected you all your life, to share with a grandmother beloved to many. She is a beacon of light ~ as are the land and people . . .

Thank you for all the gifts, the many, many gifts of heart and spirit you have shared over the years, for the family . . . I am so very proud of you and you are an inspiration to us all.



*Interlude*

~

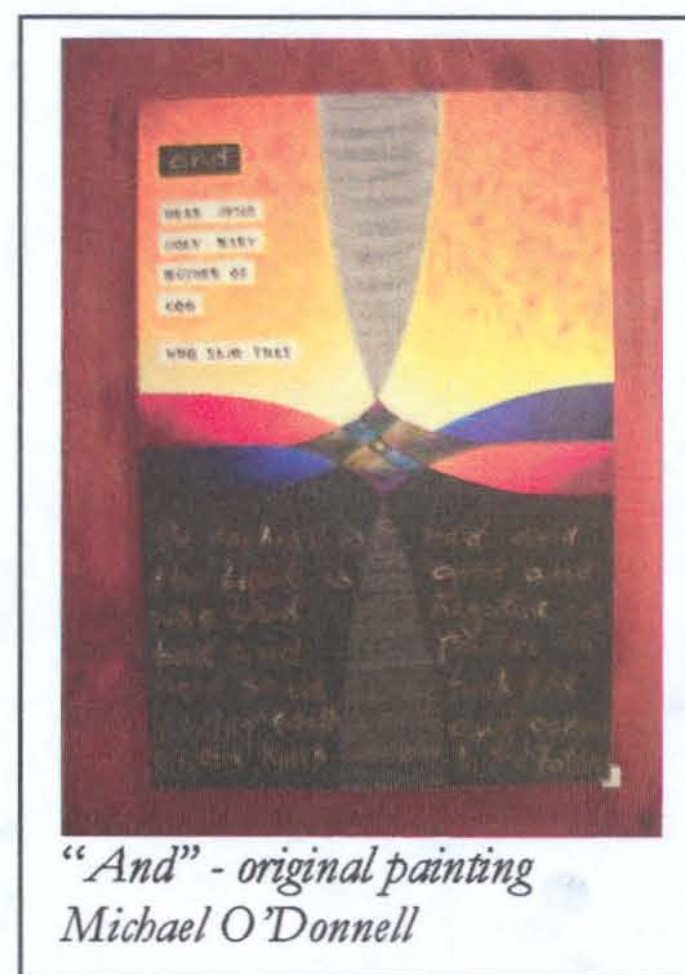
*The Father*

“By whose authority do you claim dominion over . . . ?

“AND  
DEAR JESUS  
HOLY MARY  
MOTHER OF  
GOD

WHO SAID THAT

the darkness is bad and  
the light is good and  
who said negative is  
bad and positive is  
good so we fuck the  
mother earth and go down  
on our knees to the father”  
(O'Donnell, 2006).



“And” - original painting  
Michael O'Donnell

*The first journey, the letting go, is the release of the Father . . .*

*La tierra Madre  
La tierra Madre .*

It's been so ingrained in me—*One never speaks ill of the Father.* “Sometimes the father has to be pleaded with and placated,” a friend says. But that's the whole point—why plead, why placate? A square classroom turns into a round circle. *The source returns to itself . . .*

Mysteries, riddles come spilling forth.

In a square classroom is the voice of my father, “conform, be still, don't speak out.” Somehow I broke out, the wild child. Inspired by a friend's challenge I look back and see darkness spilling forth, dark caves, dark times. But darkness always seeks light to illuminate the shadows, to bring forth what was unknown or unwanted into bright, regenerating light.

*Going Home . . .*

In a square classroom I take on the voice of challenge—you are not us, you are of other people, instilling the voice of compassion to hear, to hopefully listen, walking out feeling the pain of the world and knowing, at some level, we are no different and yet so different.

I have been pained by the disparity in the classroom, by the separation and experience of fear, of us and them, you and I, we somewhere, an ancestor in common yet so far apart, feeling pain and anger so freely flowing between people, re-membering:

“He aha te mea i te Ao Marama?  
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.”

“What is the most important thing in the world?  
It is people, it is people, it is people.”  
(Maori proverb)

Discussions of race, class, gender, social inequities opening my eyes and my heart to difference, power, and ongoing conflicts. How could I learn to transcend difference?

*“Can one die, psychologically,  
to all one’s past, to all the  
attachments, fears,  
to the anxiety, vanity,  
and pride, so completely that  
tomorrow you wake up  
a fresh human being”  
(Krishnamurti as quoted in Combs, 135)?*

Sometimes I felt afraid (but who would admit it) sitting in a corner, anxious, knowing my viewpoint would be different from others.

“Fear itself is no excuse. Of course darkness conjures up fear. But what do we do with fear? Do we let it run our lives, our politics, our way of seeing the world? Do we allow it to trigger a fight-or-flight reaction? ‘Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood.’ The darkness is our teacher, for in the darkness we can taste true wisdom. Enemies are also our teachers. We need not fear our enemies, for we ought to learn from them and even praise them for the strength and insight they solicit from us. Hatred interferes with the development of happiness and compassion; it is a distraction” (Fox as quoted in Combs, xiii).



“All conflict is an invitation to evolve. ‘Stuck, we will try to rescue others instead of evolving.’ Rescuing others, even when our intentions are good, can be an obstacle to growth and evolution. A deep part of evolution is the release of creativity that inevitably comes when we dare to travel to our ‘growing edges.’ For our ‘growing edge is the point that our ever-evolving self is moving toward next” (Fox as quoted in Combs, xiv).

*Issues of compassion, of reaching out . . .*

*Dialogue 4*

~

*Synthesis ~ Fragments ~ Wholeness*

*The last cup of tea . . .*

Weaving new life and breath requires deliberate reflexive examination of form, element, and process, knowing intuitively if one is to bring an interdisciplinary perspective to any field of study it is important to know what strands and threads have already been woven, what baskets have been created, nurtured, and embodied in various forms of formal and non-formal practice.

Parker Palmer asks the question, “How, and why, does academic culture discourage us from living connected lives?” (1998, 35) continuing “If we want to develop and deepen the capacity for connectedness . . . we must understand—and resist—the perverse but powerful draw of the ‘disconnected’ life” (1998, 35). He identifies the use of objectivism as a potential challenge stating “For objectivism, any way of knowing that requires subjective involvement between knower and the known is regarded as primitive, unreliable, and even dangerous. The intuitive is derided as irrational, true feeling is dismissed as sentimental, the imagination is seen as chaotic and unruly, and storytelling is labeled as personal and pointless,” (1998, 52) further claiming “A mode of knowing arises from the way we answer two questions at the heart of the educational mission: How do we know what we know? And by what warrant can we call our knowledge true” (1998, 50–51)?

Palmer also talks about how truth and knowledge in education are often embedded within a culture of fear:

“Academic institutions offer myriad ways to protect ourselves from the threat of a live encounter . . . . This fear of a live encounter is actually a sequence of fears that begins in the fear of diversity . . . . If we embrace diversity, we find ourselves on the doorstep of our next fear: fear of the conflict that will ensue when divergent truths meet . . . . If we peel back our

fear of conflict, we find a third layer of fear, the fear of losing identity . . . . Many of us are so deeply identified with our ideas that when we have a competitive encounter, we risk losing more than the debate: we risk losing our sense of self . . . . If we embrace the promise of diversity, of creative conflict, and of ‘losing’ in order to ‘win,’ we still face one final fear—the fear that a live encounter with otherness will challenge or even compel us to change our lives” (1998, 37–38).

Often I feel there is a relationship between learning, ways of knowing, and the implications for perpetuating fear and violence. *Fear of speaking up, speaking out . . . fear of knowing one’s self, fear of knowing another outside the box . . .* I am touched by the struggle for basic rights and recognition in the Pacific and so have chosen to also examine writers outside the region to bring a complementary interdisciplinary voice to the dialogue. Ultimately, I feel education is one vehicle that has great potential to be an agent for social justice and also for the realization of one’s ‘human self,’ for finding a path from separation into wholeness.

*Another breath . . .*

The world is alive with life and breath, interconnectedness—intelligence. “Merleau-Ponty . . . spent much of his life demonstrating that the event of perception unfolds as a reciprocal exchange between the living body and the animate world that surrounds it. He showed that this exchange . . . is highly articulate” (Abram, 73–74). Articulating this relationship allows the heart and mind to grow in unity, countering the objective paradigm prevalent in hegemonic educational discourses, allowing feeling to become a site of power, to literally embody knowledge and resist our subjugation and oppression (Boler, 1999). The self becomes the mirror . . . the inner heart/knowing/intuition becomes the inner teacher.

“Who is the self that teaches? . . . is the most fundamental question we can ask about teaching and those who teach—for the sake of learning and those who learn” (Palmer

1998, 7). David Marshak in his book, *The Common Vision: Parenting and Educating for Wholeness*, also speaks to the power of knowing and imagination as it is expressed in Waldorf education.

He says,

“Inspirational knowing brings the knower completely into the worlds of soul and spirit. The ego takes on a total identity with the other, the known, and in doing so, loses its initial sense both of itself and of the other. This absolute identity brings to it a higher level of being, that of soul and spirit. Here there are no images, only conceptions to be known by the ego. In this mode of knowing, inspiration offers an impression that the ego forms into an ideal. In this way of knowing, the knower completely loses his consciousness of self and instead experiences the known from within on the levels of soul and spirit” (53–54).

*Unfragmenting ~ deschooling . . .*

“I began to realize that what I witnessed in the classroom were symptoms of the alienating qualities of much Western social science discourse, particularly its tendency to detach problems from their cultural and social contexts for objective analysis” (Wesley-Smith, 82).

“L.A.: We believe our collective model, depicted in written form, cannot represent our ideas. Because the written form is a Western technology, we present our collective model in difference voices. The substance can be found in the bodies and minds of indigenous people. We share through our oral traditions of telling and singing stories” (Nee-Benham, 114).

Voices, ideas, and knowledge from different regions of the world including the Pacific can bring the opportunity for synthesis, respect for dialogue and difference, and the potential for mutual understanding based on humanity.

“My vocation (to use the poet’s term) is the spiritual life, the quest for God, which relies on the eye of the heart. My avocation is education, the quest for knowledge, which relies on the eye of the mind. I have seen life through both these eyes as long as I can remember - but the two images have not always coincided . . . I have been forced to find ways for my eyes to work together, to find a common focus for my spirit-seeking heart and my knowledge-seeking mind that embraces reality in all its amazing dimensions” (Palmer 1983, xxiv).

*New breath . . . falling, rising. Focus . . .*

“Learning from a spiritual perspective does not consist of the continual accumulation of knowledge. From a spiritual viewpoint, letting go is as important as acquiring. Our heads can become stuffed with irrelevant facts

that can prevent us from seeing things as they are. Spiritual teachers have talked about the importance of ‘emptying the mind.’ The Tao te Ching states that ‘In the pursuit of knowledge, everyday something is added. In the practice of the Tao, everyday something is dropped’” (Miller in O’Sullivan, et al, 96).

*I have to ‘forget’ before I can re-member . . . to empty completely, to re-new ~ to light-ly touch the essence~force of my own body.*

Carol Christ talks about the embodiment of language through the body. She speaks of the necessity to know our bodies and our own knowing before we can come home, that it is a process of renewal and remembering (1995).

*Creativity . . .*

“A woman may also give birth to her own creative work, which comes out of the womb of her own experience in which she has had to plumb her own depth as a woman and labor to bring it forth. A woman who does this gives herself over to a creative process that is like a pregnancy, when this is the case. Something in her wants to be given form through her; the work comes out of her and draws from her talents and experience, and yet it has its own life.

*A woman who is maternal , nurturing, or creative in these ways does not live in her head. There is an instinctual feminine quality to what she does and how she does what she does, or knows what she knows (itals mine)”* (Bolen, 70–71).

Wherever I go, I look for the movements of the moon and stars through the night sky, always seeking Orion and Matariki. They help maintain connection and relationship with land, people, and place. Just after the start of the Maori New Year my friend Michael awoke before dawn to share the rising of Matariki above the horizon, bounded by mountains below. I nearly cried. This is a special time. He explained Venus would rise shortly thereafter, following Matariki. They are part of remaining whole . . . .

Following the rhythms of the day, knowing how to live in a connected world that values relationship, connection, and truth, one that recognizes the world is alive, dynamic, and animate can be considered a radical act. Starhawk speaks of the necessity to listen deeply, to engage in action that allows us “to live for a moment in the consciousness of the



whole,” and as we do so “we become more whole, more healed” (28). To become healers in this wounded world, we should cherish this knowledge and open our ears and realize the world is speaking to us. This process that allows the human being to become more fully alive (Starhawk 2004) and acts as a counterbalance to the prevalent paradigm of alienation and fragmentation often found in contemporary education, connecting our body with the body of the earth. As George J Sefa Dei writes in *Spiritual Knowing and Transformative Learning*:

My understanding of transformative learning is that education should be able to resist oppression and domination by strengthening the individual self and the collective souls to deal with the continued reproduction of colonial and recolonial relations in the academy. It must also assist the learner to deal with pervasive effects of imperial structures of the academy on the processes of knowledge production and validation” (Dei 2001, 121).

Being able to speak, write, and dream from one’s innate place of knowing, a place of connection and interrelationship is essential to educational transformation and creating a pedagogy of hope. “Hope is the story that keeps us going. Hope defines this time in history as a great turning; a time when human beings are taking our place as the earthly ones capable of wisdom and good judgement. Hope blows evidence of this capacity back into our hearts, and fills us with stories that inspire action” (Baldwin, 230).

*Realizing potential . . . .*

*Transformation*  
~  
*Creative Learning*

*"Deep inside me I know that if enough people have the courage to move beyond their limited, known, personal position to allow more light and love to enter their bodysouls, our collective body, Earth, might have a better chance of surviving" (Woodman et al, 154–156).*

***Te Miringa Kakara***  
*April 11, 2007*

If you look for difference, you may see difference.  
If you look for what is the same or similar that is what you may see . . .

*"Man is made by his belief.  
As he believes, so he is."  
(Bhagavad Gita as quoted in Combs, xi).*

***Te Miringa Kakara***  
*Easter Sunday*  
*April 8, 2007*

I return to the place that grounds me, to the place I call home. It is as close to home as I will get in this land. I always return here, in spirit or in body when I need to feel close to the earth, to be able to listen from within the depths of my heart. It is the deep silence of this place that I seek, the ability to listen to the call of the ancestors and be at peace.

The marae awakens in the morning to the lyrical call of magpie, to sun rising over a nearby hill, to dew sparkling in the grass, to the call of the heart to come home. It is a reminder of places that have come before . . . At daybreak a karakia is sent to the east for reconnection, for renewal, for thanks, and for love.

*"Thank you for who you are and thank you for allowing us to be who we are . . ."*

Where is home, you may ask?

A talk with a woman visiting the marae reveals she is from a city about an hour's drive away, but she grew up nearby. She is home on the marae. Her family is of this place, linked into this place by whakapapa.

She asks where I come from, where is my family, my land, my people. I say I am from the States—my father's family is from the east coast and my mother's family is from the west coast, but we have cousins up north in the Hokianga. That I am more at home in rural places than urban ones. That gardens and children's play, and laughter, and the love of family can touch the heart and bring people together through their stories. For now, it seems so far away and yet so familiar.

Today is a work day. Workers arrive, new tin is hammered into the whare chimney, the roof washed, and wood brought in so we can have a fire for cooking. Although the journey is done, there is always mahi to tend to. Sometimes conversation, cups of tea, and taking care of little things are more important than intellectual pursuits.

Coming here for over ten years now I marvel at the connections, people and places coming through. A woman asks, "Does my family think it's a bit odd that I am so far from home, that I keep coming back—do they understand?" And I say "Yes, I am far from home, and no, I feel they do not understand, but they do their best to do so." I left home when I was seventeen, but have been traveling since I was a very young child mainly through the United States. Every year my family would take camping trips and for years my brothers and I would visit my grandparents during the summer.

Why the marae? It is question that has deeper implications as the journey goes on. It is a place so far from home and yet familiar. Often whanau wonder what a 'Pakeha' woman is doing on the marae and sometimes they are cautious.

I love listening to the magpies as they wake up in the morning, their raucous calls at first light, the cows calling from a distance, and the sheep when they are around. This is a big place with big sky and you can see all the stars at night when it is clear—the imprint of the Milky Way . . . When I return, I come to listen and to be. The quiet is stilling and this is a place of learning, just as the woods, streams, and mountains were my refuge and place of learning, continual learning in my youth. Books are always there, but it was—and is—the experience, the learning that comes through experience and meeting other people and places that counts the most. The connections are vital and enduring . . .

What do I call home? Who is present there and what do I hope to learn? The journey has been one of a continual search for self. I have often asked myself why I left “home” at such an early age and never looked back. That’s how the story goes . . . But at some point you do look back and discover, realize that the past is as close to the present and the future as your own breath—the memories and the unfolding of what is yet to come. The memories of running through the field up the hill and down through the woods to greet the stream at the old waterfall/mill site in Pennsylvania meet with the stream running through the farm block by the marae—where seeds float by and spin on the ripples of the water, linking past to present. The feel of bare feet upon dew dropped grass, the meeting of wild land within to continue the journey without . . .

I suppose that’s why I came home to the marae for Easter ~ to greet the sunrise and say yet another prayer for renewal, for peace, for hope . . . Hope that there will be more days to come.

It’s been a long journey, and it’s time to go . . .  
*Papatuanuku*, Earth Mother, my refuge and home.  
 Home wherever I go, home for as long as I live.  
*May your heart be as close to her as every living breath and beating heart . . .*

*Home :)*

***Refuge***

*Refuge is a small stream where the  
 sound of singing waters stills chaos  
 and Births me*

*Home.*

*Refuge is a place where stillness  
 prevails, the mind wanders,  
 Heart careens  
 Waters bless ~ whakapai, release . . .*

*Still  
 Stillness — Be.*

*Refuge is returning to  
 the mountains  
 to hear the Waters sing.*



### *Te Haerenga*

Unearthing an archeology of the soul—the bones of the ancestors, the bones of present time . . . *an archetype*.

I never guessed that by agreeing to go on a journey, either consciously or unconsciously, that I would experience such a range of emotion, knowledge, feeling. There is no theory here, only knowing. The archetype is one of fleshing out the bones and re-membering—deeply re-membering—Who I am, where I come from . . . . When the estrangement with family—blood family, extended family—went so deep, I returned to nature where I had always been unconditionally received. *Revived, restored, re-storied*. These stories became part of my journey, knowing I would move on, called inexplicably into realms unknown.

Why do I tell my story? I never expected to find shelter from the storm and, yet somehow, it has happened. The way I am moved, my Heart, knowing through the world transforms my knowing. I never expected to tell the story having buried the journals intended for a book choosing instead to live the knowledge rather than write about it.

It has been incredibly painful at times to write, although joyful as well in the release, feeling exposed, naked, vulnerable. It has been hard at times to know what to reveal and who or what to keep in the shadows, either out of respect or because of not being able to talk about certain things, or just plain not being ready to speak—that the knowing and accumulated experience are not fully integrated enough to be able to write from my own place of Being, my own truth—inner Truth. *Authenticity* . . . Integration comes in its own time and its own way. It is only then that I feel comfortable writing or speaking . . .

I would like to emphasize that I didn't want this paper to be about me, much preferring to be at the back of the canoe going quietly rather than at the front, but somehow

having to explain, critique, and describe my own journey has brought healing and resolution. In reality this was a community effort supported, awhi-d by family, friends, and whanaunga on both sides of the Pacific. In some small way I feel it is their story as well.

My knowledge and experience is fragmented—walking on the ocean wave, surfing different land forms—body as land, land as Earth, *Papatuanuku*. I'd like to say there's an end to this, a tidy conclusion but in reality the journey was taken on as process. At some point, as was pointed out by the thesis committee, process has to be truncated to begin writing what has happened. In this essence the journey is spiral, ongoing, however this text reflects snapshots of events, reflections, and learning that happened along the way and it's not intended to be a complete, whole version of the experience as some things are best left unsaid, left to gestate in silence for another time—to trust the wisdom of time, complete time—the journey of waiting . . .

True learning for me embodies an exploration, kind of a pilgrimage for knowledge, not only self-knowledge but also participation in community. Learning is seldom a solo action—happening in concert, intertwined, interdependent upon everyone and everything around me. It's not my intention to privilege formal over non-formal learning or pedagogy, nor indigenous over non-indigenous worlds/knowledge or vice versa, as they exist side by side, however I acknowledge these paradigms of separation and ideas/experiences do exist with their myriad of complexities, conflicts, politics, searches for social justice, and their own form of liberation. I have deliberately chosen not to focus solely on these splits as there is a multitude of literature available written by authors who are much more knowledgeable and experienced. What has been important is getting to know myself as a mid-life woman navigating the labyrinth of academia, family, whanaunga, and land between two cultures, two

distinct lands, bringing together what was once experienced as separate—now forming into a sense of continuity, expression, and longing for a connected/better world.

The archetype of the wounded feminine searching the forest for her beloved, her community, her re-newed self is a universal journey. What was buried, long lost, or forgotten resurfaced years later in a burst of creativity and transformation, for I've been utterly transformed by these challenges. What more could you ask for in an education?

It's best to say that the more I learn the less I know and it's really better that way. I'd encourage everyone to view this story, this paper, as one person's experience. Your journey, your experience and knowledge may be different and I feel that's important too. With your story and my story, your basket and my basket we can go together.

I'm not asking anyone to understand, for understanding is of the mind and I prefer to move with the Heart, knowing, Being. Perhaps one day you'll find a trail or journey that claims your passion and we may sit down to have a cup of tea and korero.

May your journey be Blessed.

*Thank you for listening . . .*

*Arohanui,*

Judith

*~ the end of summer, with  
a tinge of fall in the air ~ composting . . .  
April 6, 2008  
Auckland*



*Hills and Valleys*  
~  
*Methodology and Beyond*

***Auckland***

*January 21, 2008*

This was essentially a journey that moved across interdisciplinary, cross-cultural landscapes towards “a radical profound transformation in the way we relate to nature” (Sponsel, 2006), to learning, and to ourselves. It was a journey of reciprocal exchange, of creating a meeting point and beginning a relationship of healing and remembering (Batten, 21).

***Auckland***

*February 16, 2008*

*Birthing . . .*

I feel beaten, battered, and bruised—this journey has been as much about finding my own voice and learning to live in my own body as it has been an intellectual academic journey. Who doesn’t feel birthing pains when in labor or navigating new terrain? I feel as if my body is shaped into a new form, with the waters of both places shaping the tides of the mind and beyond. It is a spiritual as well as physical journey—walking the land and speaking the tongues of two places.

Learning Maori opened new vistas into understanding that could only be beyond words. Sometimes there are no comparisons for the translation of one language into another—only a journey that can be walked and felt upon the land, upon the prayers, laughter, tears, and thoughts of those who have gone before, the hopes and dreams of those who were on this land and continue to be here. This is the journey of the mind and the soul. How could the classroom *not* be such, when asked to meet such challenges.

“Stories move in circles. They don’t move in straight lines.  
 So it helps if you listen in circles.  
 There are stories inside stories and stories between stories,  
 and finding your way through them is as easy  
 and as hard as finding your way home.  
 And part of the finding is getting lost.  
 And when you’re lost, you start to look around and listen.”  
 (Fischer, Greenberg, and Newman)

The original classroom was sitting outside, becoming absorbed with the seasons—  
 watching the changing places of the sun and moon as they ride upon the sky day and night,  
 seeing the tides come and go, rain, sun, the colours of the rainbow, the mist on the wind and  
 in the mind—the Heart of Being. Did you know in Aotearoa New Zealand the sun returns  
 to the north in winter and to the south in summer? It is the opposite of my childhood  
 learning and has turned my life upside down. The fish—Te Ika a Maui . . . the sea—Te  
 Moana Nui a Kiwa . . . the water flows between me and in my blood . . . *blood tides, moon tides.*

When I returned to Pennsylvania last November I realized it has taken a lifetime of  
 walking woods, creeks, pathways, concrete jungles . . . listening, deep intense listening to be  
 part of this apprenticeship—not simply one paper, one journey, or one undertaking. I will  
 always remain in between for there is no going home, in the sense of returning to where I  
 came from. There is only going forward, dropping the illusion that there is one place or  
 another to anchor, one methodology, method, or site that could encompass this project. The  
 winds always blow in change . . .

***Auckland***  
*April 8, 2008*

Although it may be obvious to some the difference between methodology and  
 method, it is only now upon completing this text that I am beginning to integrate the two.  
 After many months of searching, I located what would become a working definition to act as  
 a guide:



“A research methodology is a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed . . . . A research method is a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence. . . . Within an indigenous framework methodological debates are ones concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of indigenous research” (Harding as quoted in Hanora, 19).

Working with Kaupapa Maori protocols presented a paradox for me. Within Aotearoa New Zealand, I identify culturally both as Maori and Pakeha as well as being a global citizen. I did a brief review of Kaupapa Maori literature thinking I would work more in depth with related theory and methods and got lost in it—not being Maori, being seen as Pakeha but not identifying wholly with either one proved to be too big a forest to traverse. There were mistakes made in my methodological assumptions and these became part of the learning. By not consulting my own community or extended whanau prior to initiating research, due to the pressures of academic deadlines and my own inexperience, I omitted one of the important aspects of Kaupapa Maori protocols—consultation and requesting permission at the project’s inception. This mistake was only realized after attending the Traditional Knowledge conference in Wellington. An apology was forthcoming upon my return to Hawai‘i and a formal request extended to whanau for kaumatua support which was honored. Whanau also provided support in other ways, either meeting *kanohi ki te kanohi*/face to face, as is the preferred custom in this land or when appropriate, discussing concerns by phone when time and distance did not permit a face to face meeting. Draft copies of the paper were placed with them for further consultation and comment. In this respect, navigating cultural as well as academic learning curves required learning how to respect and balance the demands of both worlds.

*Fleshing out the body. The bones of the ancestors . . .*

The terms nature/natural world, Aotearoa New Zealand/Aotearoa/New Zealand, whanau/family, spirit/spirituality/universe/Creator/God/Goddess, and

Papatuanuku/Earth/Earth mother are used interchangeably. Whanaunga is used to denote extended family. These terms can be defined theoretically in many different ways, however I prefer to let them sit as they came in the writing, sitting in the essence of the ‘body’ of the text—they have both literal and metaphorical meaning and in some ways are a reflection of the shifting sands under my feet. Some sentences in the text are italicized as a reflection of an ongoing subterranean dialogue. In the paper’s title “Rainbows” are a metaphorical reference to the people of the four winds; “Oceans of Knowing” to the waters of all places and the many pathways and ways of knowledge/knowing that can be touched upon. Water weaves this story together . . .

Storytelling is an integral part of this research project—both written and visual. Each story is powerful and contributes to a person’s sense of place, to connections between past, present, and future. Stories are treasures that focus on dialogue and conversations between people and the land/space they inhabit. They can be a useful and culturally appropriate way to represent the knowledge of the storyteller rather than the knowledge of the researcher (Smith 1999). I originally planned to conduct interviews and received approval from the University of Hawai‘i human subjects review committee. Ultimately this method was tabled and set aside. When the call went out asking for people to participate the door did not open and that was respected as being part of going with the flow, listening to the wairua side. What has been included are excerpts/impressions received from informal conversations without specifically identifying the speaker. The dichotomy here is that I became both storyteller and researcher.

Digital photographs were used to enhance the text and provide context, documenting spaces within the land and theorizing through visual media to complement the writing. The photographs were taken with a Nikon Coolpix 5600 digital camera and the

images were processed using iPhoto imaging software. There were many occasions where I felt having a lens between me and my “subject” was an obstacle to fully experiencing the place or situation. Any direct shots of people were intentionally omitted, although their presence is implied along with an awareness of the exclusion and privilege embodied in these locations. While photographing Waipoua forest in particular, taking pictures of the signs and trees, I was reminded of how fragments and words can be reconstructed, repositioned, and placed into another world of meaning, or potential meaning (Rose, 2001).

The concept of pilgrimage as a mystical journey was utilized as an invitation to create a visual, feeling, and con-textual ‘record’ intended to move the reader beyond mind-centered theoretical space into an experiential, multi-sensory experience. Journals, photographs, and letters became part of the ongoing dialogue and reflexive autoethnographic practice (Ellis and Bochner 2000). Here traditional theoretical research-based inquiry is as valid and informing to personal and community education as an experiential multi-sited journey (K Teaiwa 2004).

~ ~ ~

*“Through the eye of the needle . . .”*

E tika ana te korero  
i o tatou tupuna

The korero is true  
of our tupuna

“Kotahi te kōhao o te ngira  
e kuhuna ai te miro mā,  
te miro pango,  
te miro whero.  
I muri, kia mau ki te aroha,  
ki te ure,  
ki te whakapono.”

“Through the one eye of the needle  
pass the white threads,  
the black threads,  
and the red threads.  
Afterwards, hold firmly to your love,  
to the law,  
and to the Faith”  
(Potatatau Te Wherowhero  
as quoted in McGrath, 3).

This proverb was first received on a journey to Aotearoa New Zealand over ten years ago, left in a journal buried deep in the earth on the North Island, only to resurface again during fall semester, 2005 as an inspirational, deep, pulsing ongoing meditation.

“This very famous whakatauki originated from Potatau Te Wherowhero. At the time he was crowned as king it was said he would be judged by god and his response was this famous proverb. God is the hole of the needle and the different colored threads are us, mankind. We all live on this earth and have different religions and beliefs. In the end there is only one god although he appears in a different manner and appearance to each religion” (McGrath, 3).

I often feel am coursing/navigating through the eye of the needle in my studies and with my life experience, bridging liminal and known worlds. A friend suggested the thread that will pass through the eye of the needle are the children who are with us now, and those yet to come. What kind of world will we endeavor to create and leave for these very gifted souls who have chosen to join the human and planetary family in such turbulent, yet promising times? How can one plant a garden that will nurture their body, mind, and soul, and bring to light the potential they hold? These are the questions that continue to drive my own inquiry and experience, the conscious and unconscious choices inherent in this pilgrimage.

Ehara ahau i te tangata mohio  
ki te korero  
otira,  
e tika ana  
kia mihi atu kia mihi mai.

I am not a knowledgeable person  
at speaking  
but  
it is right  
that we exchange greetings.

~ ~ ~

### *Soul Journeys . . .*

#### Ten Essentials for Soulmaking/ “General Wolf Rules for Life

1. Eat
  2. Rest
  3. Rove in between
  4. Render loyalty
  5. Love the children
  6. Cavil in moonlight
  7. Tune your ears
  8. Attend to the bones
  9. Make love
  10. Howl often”
- (Estes, 461).

Soulmaking is about walking a path that is true to who you are. Along the way there are many detours and challenges that appear, matters of the heart and the mind that throw roadblocks to be considered. Some stories talk about soulmaking and soul journeys, the realization of who you are as a human being in relation to yourself, your community, and the connections that abound there. The form of the resulting work and writing is experimental. I’ve done what I can within the constraints of physical and emotional energy, academic deadlines, and dealing with the flow of natural rhythms. *Balance . . .*

I realize some of the ideas and experiences expressed are repetitive, and in my best ‘academic’ linear way I want to arrange them in a straight line, however the journey comes in and out of itself in different places at different times . . . *Birth, conception, pregnancy . . . Death, rebirth.* There is no beginning and no end. Emerging from the dark into light, the story shapes itself as the journey unfolds and begins to expand into consciousness. It’s an ancient tide and one I’ve been glad to honor as part of this learning process.

In endings there are always new beginnings. Soul journeys are ongoing paths, filled ~ imbued with creative spirit, transformation, and a desire to learn about the world. Sometimes

there is waiting and sometimes it is there is not . . . The ancestors guide and lead, helping to open the way and show what is true and correct. I am thankful for their presence and for many others along the way.

“In Barry Lopez’s allegorical fable *Crow and Weasel*, two friends are returning home after a long journey when they meet Badger. They tell her where they have been and what has happened to them. She knows that it is not just the journey but the story that is important and tells them why:

The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive” (Bolen, 273).



*Epilogue*  
*October, 2008*

*A grandmother speaks—*

*‘It is time now to return the seed, to return the paper to the elements from which it came —  
Earth, air, fire, wind, water, . . .  
The last cup of tea has been served and the fire died down. Time now to rest and contemplate, to gestate and  
let come to maturity that which has been learned. Only in the fires of time does true learning come.’*

Drawn as I am into these worlds of deep feeling, seeing the image of a dear friend laid out on her healing table—beauty and wisdom radiant in her tangi, her welcoming farewell. It is such when an old friend goes and transitions to a new world, for we farewelled a dear sister and friend during the completion of this paper. The sorrow and joy for her journey cut deep as her wisdom unfolds through the stream, through the waters and tears that come streaming down from Papatuanuku into the blood of a new day. Her mate and longtime friend hold court beside the stream to welcome those who come through . . . a time of silence and waiting . . . for the story to come forth.

We all wait forth. It has been months of waiting, and sorrowing and change and holding all those dear. Walking the old trails in the mountains of home to learn and release, to challenge and abide by the lore of old, being reminded of the natural cycles of death, decay, rebirth—new foundations . . . Walking by the moon tides and sitting beside the elders of old . . .

It has been a struggle to decide if this paper would stay in its present form or be allowed to mutate/move into another more formal, ‘academic’ form. But in the end it is the realization that the Center for Pacific Islands Studies master’s program was chosen precisely for the ability to combine creative and academic forms, to allow space to grow and learn, to realize potential in the best possible way. I wanted the freedom to write and create from the

heart, to challenge . . . to build upon the learning presented in undergraduate studies and life experience . . . Completion. With this in mind I choose to respect the wairua and flow of things, keeping in mind the elders' comments that it is good to place side by side the personal with the formal, element with form . . . a celebration, if you will.

I am happy to go now, receiving the comments in a few days from a dear old friend who has mentored the waters and shared the lore—sometimes abrupt/brusque and sometimes very gentle. In choosing the creative form lives a hope to honour the ability to weave and sing in many different lands, languages, and colours of the rainbow.

*Wishing you well . . .  
Sing sweet.*

*Appendix*  
~  
*Maori Words*

arohanui	affection, love, sympathy
awa	river
awhina/awhi	help
haerenga	a trip, journey
iwi	tribe
karakia	prayer
kuia	elder woman; grandmother
manuhiri	guest; visitor
marae	traditional Maori gathering place
matamua	oldest child
mihi	greet; greeting
Pakeha	person of European descent
pepeha	proverb; quotation; witty saying
potiki	youngest child
rangatahi	youth
reo	language
tautoko	to support
wai	water
waiata	song
wairua	spirit
whakapai	bless
whakapapa	genealogy
whanau	family
whanaunga	kin, relation; extended family
whare	building; house
whenua	land; placenta

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